

Philosophy Department
Dallas Baptist University

Description of the Philosophy Department:

The program in philosophy is dedicated, on the foundation of the Christian faith, to the pursuit of an understanding of reality, both infinite and finite; to the systematic study of ideas and a reasoned pursuit of truth; to an examination of the principles of moral conduct and aesthetic experience; and overall, seeks to understand the world and human life from the perspective of a Christian world view. The goals of this department are to acquaint the student with the main philosophical subdisciplines (metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics); to learn to think, speak, write, and evaluate logically and critically; to understand the main problems of philosophy and the solutions proposed to them; to trace the development of the history of philosophy, and to become familiar with the main philosophers and their systems of thought which have contributed to this history. Those majoring in philosophy will be prepared for graduate school and/or careers in law, ministry, teaching, business, and writing, as well as pursuing philosophy itself professionally. Students may pursue either a B.A. or a B.S. in philosophy. Students may also minor in philosophy (18 hours required, 9 at the upper level). See requirements below.

Goals of the Philosophy Major

1. To enable students to obtain a general understanding of the methods, vocabulary, and overall content of the discipline of philosophy.
2. To train students in the basic principles of sound reasoning and critical thinking.
3. To expose students to the essential tenets of fundamental worldviews, including a Biblical vision of reality, and training them in the art of thinking presuppositionally.
4. To teach students how philosophic thought has unfolded throughout the centuries by becoming familiar with the main ideas of key philosophers who have contributed significantly to the development of the Western intellectual tradition.
5. To acquaint students with the major sub-disciplines in philosophy including metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics, and to enable them to grasp the major works of thinkers in these respective fields of philosophic study.

6. To impart to students enhanced expertise in the research and writing process through the composition of a senior project on a topic of historic or contemporary philosophical importance.

Additional Features of the DBU Philosophy Department:

1. After completing the core or foundation courses, the reading list for DBU philosophy courses will be comprised of primary source materials, that is, books, not textbooks.
2. DBU philosophy students will demonstrate an ability to articulate the essentials of the Christian worldview and manifest a fundamental grasp of and ability to integrate faith and learning.
3. DBU philosophy majors will have the opportunity to present an academic paper in the Friday Symposium under the direction of the department faculty who will supervise and critique the preparation and presentation of the paper.
4. All philosophy majors will be encouraged to consider graduate education in philosophy as well as other academic disciplines, and will receive assistance in learning about and applying to these various graduate programs.

Requirements for a Philosophy Major at DBU (30 hours):

PHIL 2301 (3-3-0) Introduction to Philosophy

An introduction to basic philosophic concerns such as metaphysics, logic, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics, including a survey of major philosophic problems and the answers proposed by various major philosophers. A Biblical and theological framework for thinking Christianly about philosophy will be presented. Fall, Spring, Online.

PHIL 2302 (3-3-0) Introduction to Logic

A study of the principles of correct thinking. This course examines the laws of logic, inductive and deductive reasoning, and shows the relevance of sound argumentation to philosophic, scientific, academic, and personal enterprises. The nature of formal and informal logical fallacies is considered. The course is designed to help students obtain proficiency in critical thinking. Spring, odd-numbered years.

PHIL 2303 (3-3-0) Introduction to World Views

An introduction to the nature, definition, and importance of world views in general and to basic world view systems in particular (e.g., theism, deism, naturalism, pantheism). This course will highlight the importance of thinking “worldviewishly” by giving special attention to the role of assumptions and presuppositions in the academic disciplines, in the diversity of cultures, and in personal life. Fall.

PHIL 3301 (3-3-0) History of Philosophy I: Classical and Medieval

A survey and critique of the major Western philosophers and their ideas in the Ancient, Christian, and Medieval Periods (i.e., from the pre-Socratic philosophers to Thomas Aquinas). Fall.

Prerequisite: PHIL 2301 or instructor approval.

PHIL 3302 (3-3-0) History of Philosophy II: Modern and Postmodern

A continuation of PHIL 3301 consisting of a survey and critique of the major Western philosophers and their ideas in the Modern and Contemporary or Postmodern Periods (from the Renaissance to the present). Spring.

Prerequisite: PHIL 2301 or instructor approval.

PHIL 3370 (3-3-0) The Philosophy of Science and Technology

An investigation of the characteristic issues which arise when serious attempts are made to integrate twentieth century science and the Christian worldview in a constructive manner. The study will focus on how theological/scientific concerns have interfaced historically with the central philosophical categories of ontology, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics as well as emphasize what these concerns contribute to contemporary technologies. Spring, odd-numbered years.

PHIL 4301 (3-3-0) Metaphysics

A study of issues which arise from an attempt to understand reality and its manifestations, both infinite and finite. Topics include God and Trinitarianism, substance and accidents, space and time, possibility and necessity, causality, mind and body, and universals. Fall, odd-numbered years.

Prerequisite: PHIL 2301 or instructor approval.

PHIL 4302 (3-3-0) Epistemology

A study of the nature, source, types, justification, and limits of human knowledge with a focus on the Contemporary Period. The role and importance of the concept of Biblical revelation will be included. Spring, even-numbered years.

Prerequisite: PHIL 2301 or instructor approval.

PHIL 4303 (3-3-0) Ethics

A survey of the development of ethical thought, both ancient and modern. Various ethical systems and their proponents, including alternative Christian perspectives, will be covered along with a discussion of contemporary ethical problems such as abortion, homosexuality, war, ecology, business ethics, social justice, etc. Fall, even-numbered years.

Prerequisite: PHIL 2301 or instructor approval.

PHIL 4304 (3-3-0) (ART 4304)

An examination of the principles involved in the production, interpretation, and criticism of works of art, as well as basic principles of Christian aesthetic theory. Illustrative material from various artistic disciplines will be utilized. Spring, even-numbered years.

Prerequisite: PHIL 2301 or instructor approval.

PHIL 4305 (3-3-0) Senior Project

A sustained, scholarly treatment of a topic of philosophical interest to the student, guided by the student's advising professor in tutorial fashion, required as a capstone to the major. The thesis should be at least 30 pages in length and must be defended orally before a review committee. As needed.

Prerequisites: PHIL 2301, 2302, 2303, 3301, 3302, and at least two of the following: PHIL 4301, 4302, 4303, or 4304.

Minor Requirements

A minor in philosophy is designed to provide the student adequate exposure to and training in the discipline of philosophy and is an excellent complement to any academic major. Courses required for a minor in philosophy include: PHIL 2301, plus any combination of additional courses in philosophy, including 9 upper-level hours, which lead to the required 18 total hours.

Other Philosophy Courses at DBU

PHIL 3304 (3-3-0) The Christian World View (RELI 3374)

A description of the concept of world view in general and the content of the Christian world view in particular, focusing on the Biblical themes of creation, fall, redemption, and their implications in the totality of life including spiritual experience, education, the arts, vocation, the family, etc. Fall.

PHIL 3370 (3-3-0) The Philosophy of Science and Technology

An investigation of the characteristic issues which arise when serious attempts are made to integrate twentieth century science and the Christian worldview in a constructive manner. The study will focus on how theological/scientific concerns have interfaced historically with the central philosophical categories of ontology, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics as well as emphasize what these concerns contribute to contemporary technologies. Spring, odd-numbered years.

PHIL 4374 (3-3-0) Christian Apologetics (RELI 4374)

A survey of representative approaches to Christian Apologetics from the Greek fathers to the present. These will be analyzed in the light of Biblical revelation, and a comprehensive Christian apologetic will be attempted. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: PHIL 2301 or instructor approval.

PHIL 4390 (3-3-0) Independent Study

Individual reading and written research on selected philosophical topics done on an independent basis guided by a professor in the philosophy program. Offered periodically.

Prerequisite: Instructor approval.