

Philosophy Academic Learning Compact

The **expected outcomes** of the pursuit of philosophy contribute to understanding ourselves and the world around us in at least three different ways.

1. First, the pursuit of philosophy affords an opportunity to acquire an appreciation of the Western intellectual tradition (through the exploration of classical, medieval, and modern thought). Pursuing this opportunity will give students specific **content knowledge** about the various historical periods of Western philosophy and Western culture in general, and about contemporary philosophical thought.
2. Second, it provides the symbolic methods necessary for investigating principles of reasoning and patterns of argument (through an analysis of the relationship between language, logic, and the world). Pursuing this opportunity will develop competencies in **critical thinking**.
3. Third, it stimulates an appreciation of human values and interpersonal relations (through the consideration of alternative conceptions of ethical, social, and political values). Such study is critical for **communication** with others, particularly those who may not share one's own worldview.

The study of philosophy, therefore, should contribute toward the development of each student's analytical problem-solving capability and general ability to deal effectively with issues involving human values. With its concentration on analysis, clarity, and argument, the study of philosophy is particularly well suited for the development of **critical thinking**. Almost all philosophy courses address spoken and written communication through class discussion and written assignments.

Courses offered in philosophy include: Introduction to Philosophy, Aesthetics and the Arts, The Philosophy of Religion, Metaphysics, Free Will and Determinism, Medieval Philosophy, Symbolic Logic, Ethical Theory, Epistemology, The Philosophy of Language, Classical Philosophy, Modern Philosophy, Contemporary Linguistic Philosophy, Kant, Hegel, Carnap and Quine, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Whitehead, Merleau-Ponty, Kierkegaard, Foucault, and others.

An Area of Concentration in philosophy normally includes the following:

1. At least ten undertakings in philosophy, including:
 - a. competence in modern philosophy and either ancient or medieval philosophy (preferably both) (Specific Content Knowledge, Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills);
 - b. one course (or equivalent) in deductive logic (Critical Thinking Skills);
 - c. one course (or equivalent) in introduction to ethics or ethical theory plus one additional course in value theory (e.g., aesthetics, metaethics, social and political philosophy) (Specific Content Knowledge, Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills);
 - d. two courses (or equivalent) in contemporary, analytic systematic areas (e.g., metaphysics, epistemology, phenomenology, philosophy of religion) (Specific Content Knowledge, Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills);
 - e. one course in Continental thought (Specific Content Knowledge, Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills).
2. **Measures to track student progress:** Progress is tracked through the evaluation of student's work in courses and tutorials, addressing communication, critical thinking and content and, also, through each semester's contract planning discussions with philosophy area of concentration students. Students may also be asked to take an oral qualifying examination by the end of the student's fifth semester, which includes an evaluation of the student's program of study in

philosophy as well as a discussion of the prospective thesis topic (Communication Skills). In any case, each student in the AOC must discuss the prospective thesis topic with the two members of the philosophy faculty whose signatures are required for the Thesis Prospectus form.

3. **Each graduate's competencies are demonstrated** in a senior thesis and baccalaureate examination (Specific Content Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Communication Skills).