

PHILOSOPHY, BA

Philosophy majors should enjoy thinking abstractly and deeply about those questions that Bertrand Russell called “ultimate questions” — questions about the coherence or reasonableness of concepts and presuppositions that most take for granted. The ultimate questions addressed in philosophy classes include the following questions: Are humans purely physical beings, or does consciousness involve nonphysical phenomena? Do humans have free will? Does God exist? Are there objective moral facts, or is morality relative to one’s culture? What moral obligations, if any, does one have to oneself and to others? Is there any justification for government? If so, to what extent is governmental power justified?

Admission into the Major

Students are expected to formally declare a major no later than the fourth semester of full-time enrollment (or at 61 semester hours for transfer students). Students can declare a major by completing the Change of Major/Minor Application online under the Student tab of myBama.

Special Opportunities

The philosophy department honors program is designed for students who wish to pursue a philosophical topic further than the seminar format permits. It also provides recognition for both having done a greater proportion of classes at the advanced level and for sustained outstanding achievement in all courses. Students graduating with honors in philosophy must complete 36 hours in philosophy with 18 hours at the 300- or 400-level and achieve a minimum GPA of 3.5 in all philosophy courses and at least a cumulative GPA of 3.3. A philosophy honors student must also write a senior essay on a philosophical topic and defend it during an oral examination. A student who is enrolled in the University Honors Program can count his or her senior essay in philosophy as completing the honors thesis in that program.

Students earning the bachelor of arts (BA) degree with a major in philosophy must complete all University, College and departmental degree requirements. These include the general education requirements, the following major requirements, all requirements for an approved minor and other sufficient credits to total a minimum of 120 applicable semester hours.

Code and Title	Hours
Major Courses	
PHL 195 or PHL 106 Intro Deductive Logic	3
PHL 211 Ancient Philosophy	3
PHL 212 Early Modern Philosophy	3
Credit Hours Subtotal:	9
Electives	
Select 12 hours of PHL electives 300 or 400 level ¹	12
Select nine hours of PHL electives ¹	9
Credit Hours Subtotal:	21
Total Hours	30

Footnotes

¹ A minimum of three hours from each of the following areas must be completed for a total of six hours.

Areas

Area 1: Value

Code and Title	Hours
PHL 221 Honors Introduction to Ethics	3
PHL 223 Medical Ethics	3
PHL 230 Political Philosophy	3
PHL 234 Social Philosophy	3
PHL 240 Philosophy and the Law	3
PHL 243 Phil. Issues in Const. Law	3
PHL 256 Philosophy of Sport	3
PHL 291 Aesthetics	3
PHL 292 Introduction to Ethics	3
PHL 341 Law and Morality	3
PHL 343 PHL Issues-International Law	3
PHL 420 Special Studies in Ethics	3
PHL 440 Seminar on Law	3
PHL 448 Philosophy of Law	3

Area 2: Language, Epistemology, Mind and Metaphysics

Code and Title	Hours
PHL 260 Mind and Nature	3
PHL 264 Introduction to Metaphysics	3
PHL 360 Philosophy of Mind	3
PHL 362 Mind, Language, and Reality	3
PHL 366 Metaphysics	3
PHL 370 Epistemology	3
PHL 381 Philosophy of Religion	3
PHL 387 Philosophy and Evolution	3
PHL 489 Philosophy of Medicine	3

Grade Point Average

A 2.0 grade point average in the major is required for completion of the degree. Please see the Grades and Grade Points section of this catalog for an explanation on grade point average calculations.

Upper-level Residency

A minimum of 12 hours of 300- and 400-level courses in the major must be earned on this campus.

Ancillary Courses

This major does not require ancillary courses.

Required Minor

This major requires the completion of a minor.

Additional Major Requirements

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have met all University, college, major and minor requirements. However, each student must meet with an adviser in the major department for academic planning and to be approved for registration each semester. College advisers are also available for additional assistance with minor, College and University requirements.

Mind-Brain Specialization

The Mind-Brain Specialization is designed for students who are interested in philosophical questions about thought, consciousness, knowledge, and the relationship between the mind and the physical world. Students in psychology, communication, English, computer science and anthropology will find that the Mind-Brain Specialization makes philosophy an attractive second major.

Completion of the Mind-Brain specialization will be noted on the student's transcript.

Code and Title		Hours
Required Courses		
PHL 195 or	Intro Deductive Logic	3
PHL 106	Honors Deductive Logic	
PHL 211	Ancient Philosophy	3
PHL 212	Early Modern Philosophy	3
PHL 260	Mind and Nature	3
Credit Hours Subtotal:		12
Electives		
Select 12 hours of PHL Mind & Brain electives		12
PHL 360	Philosophy of Mind	
PHL 362	Mind, Language, and Reality	
PHL 366	Metaphysics	
PHL 370	Epistemology	
PHL 387	Philosophy and Evolution	
PHL 462	Neural Basis of Consciousness	
Select any additional six hours of PHL courses that include at least one Value course		6
Total Hours		30

Jurisprudence Specialization

The Jurisprudence Specialization is a collection of philosophy courses of special interest to students intending careers in law or politics, or with a curiosity about the theories underpinning these institutions. It is designed to sharpen the abilities to reason, to respond to opposing arguments, and to put one's point clearly and precisely. The specialization also provides the opportunity to explore some of the deepest questions about the law, its relation to morality, what justifies authority, and what is distinctive about legal reasoning.

Completion of the Jurisprudence specialization will be noted on the student's transcript.

Code and Title		Hours
Required Courses		
PHL 195 or	Intro Deductive Logic	3
PHL 106	Honors Deductive Logic	
PHL 211	Ancient Philosophy	3
PHL 212	Early Modern Philosophy	3
Select one of the following:		3
PHL 292 or	Introduction to Ethics	
PHL 221	Honors Introduction to Ethics	
PHL 230	Political Philosophy	
PHL 234	Social Philosophy	
Select one of the following:		3
PHL 240	Philosophy and the Law	

PHL 243	Phil. Issues in Const. Law	
Select one of the following:		3
PHL 341	Law and Morality	
PHL 343	PHL Issues-International Law	
PHL 349	Legal Reasoning	
PHL 440	Seminar on Law	
PHL 448	Philosophy of Law	
Select any three 3-hour PHL courses at the 300/400 levels.		9
Select any additional 3-hour PHL course at any level.		3
Total Hours		30

While anyone can take these classes (subject to applicable prerequisites), if you are interested in completing either the specialized major or minor, contact us at phillaw@ua.edu so that you can be put on a list of students to be contacted with relevant information. Students completing the specialized major will receive a notation on their transcript. Also, on the basis of their performance in these classes, students completing the specialized major are eligible for The Norvin Richards Award in Philosophy and the Law.

Philosophy & Medicine Specialization

The Philosophy and Medicine Specialization is a series of courses introducing topics, issues, questions and problems associated the practice of medicine. While this concentration is designed for those who are planning for a career in the medical fields, it is open to any student with an interest in medicine.

Completion of the Philosophy and Medicine specialization will be noted on the student's transcript.

Code and Title		Hours
Required Courses		
PHL 195 or	Intro Deductive Logic	3
PHL 106	Honors Deductive Logic	
PHL 211	Ancient Philosophy	3
PHL 212	Early Modern Philosophy	3
PHL 423	Seminar in Medical Ethics	3
PHL 489	Philosophy of Medicine	3
Electives		
PHL 386 or	Philosophy of Science	3
PHL 488	Philosophy of Mental Health	
Select 3 hours at 300-400 level PHL courses		3
Select 9 additional hours of any level PHL courses		9
Credit Hours Subtotal:		30

A few graduates are now themselves professors of philosophy; but most years, no major pursues graduate work in philosophy. Those who seek advanced degrees pursue degrees in fields related to their second majors or in law, medicine, divinity, or business. Other majors use their analytic skills to forge careers in education, information technology, finance, management, and writing.

Types of Jobs Accepted

Recent graduates include a number of law students, several medical students and seminary students, and also graduate students in American studies, German, public administration, public health, and business. In addition to several in business and in the military, others are employed as teachers, computer consultants, and web designers.

Jobs of Experienced Alumni

Philosophy alumni include many attorneys, a banker, a chef, a chemical engineer, a CIA employee, information technology specialists, a graphic designer, ministers, musicians, physicians, professors (of philosophy, mathematics, English, and theology), a State Department employee, web designers, and writers.

Learn more about opportunities in this field at the Career Center