

Philosophy

College of Arts and Sciences

Why Study Philosophy at John Carroll?

The prominent role of philosophy in the curriculum at John Carroll University reflects the emphasis which Catholic and Jesuit education has traditionally placed on developing a broad and coherent outlook and the intellectual capacity to deal critically with ideas. Philosophy is not merely another field of learning. It serves as a framework for all knowledge, and its study is invaluable for acquiring the skill of critical thinking which is the mark of a well-educated person. It also serves as a way of integrating knowledge. The study of philosophy is not the only way to acquire a sound education, but, as the Jesuit tradition attests, it is one of the best.

The introductory course in philosophy, which is taken by all students, will acquaint you with a variety of problems drawn from the major fields of philosophy with important writings of the most prominent philosophers. Through discussion and writing you will be taught how to examine a philosophical view and its supporting arguments critically and analytically. You will then complete the philosophy requirement by selecting one course from the 200 level, which will give you a foundation in the history of philosophy, and also one at the 300 level (taken in any order). You are encouraged to select areas of philosophy which complement your major field of study and to pursue one of them to the advanced level.

Some examples of different courses and their benefits to students are:

Pre-Law

A course in Logic is quite valuable, and Applied Ethics, Ethical Theory, Social and Political Philosophy, and the Philosophy of Law are very useful. Epistemology, which examines standards of evidence, and Philosophy of Mind, which deals with moral and legal responsibility, are sometimes relevant to judicial decisions, and the Philosophy of Science is useful for someone intending to practice in technological or scientific areas.

Pre-Medicine and Other Health Professions

The courses in Applied Ethics and Ethical Theory have direct relevance, and the Philosophy of Mind, with its emphasis on the nature of a person and the relation of mind and body, is valuable. Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Religion help to integrate medical knowledge with other points of view. Logic on any level is desirable as a part of a premedical background.

Pre-Business

The courses in Social and Political Philosophy provide a valuable background for understanding the corporation and its relationship to society and government. Marxism and Critical Theory in particular should be understood by anyone engaged in international business. Logic may contribute to the capacity to analyze data and draw conclusions. Applied and Theoretical Ethics, and especially Business Ethics, may benefit business people in their everyday activities.

History

Any course in the history of philosophy is valuable, especially for a student interested in the history of ideas. A student of modern European history, for example, would profit from the course in 17th and 18th Century Philosophy and courses in 19th and 20th Century Philosophy, and a student of American history would profit from the course on American Philosophy. The Philosophy of History course studies the nature of historical explanation and methodological problems of historical research. Social and Political Philosophy and Marxism and Critical Theory are also relevant.

Political Science

Social and political philosophy is common to both philosophy and political science, and courses in modern European and American philosophy provide a broader background. Marxism and Critical Theory is needed to understand ideologies. Courses in applied ethics, ethical theory, and the philosophy of law are of particular value to students of policy analysis, and the philosophy of science relevant to analysis of issues involving science and technology.

Literature, Languages and Fine Arts

Courses in philosophy and literature, the philosophy of language, and aesthetics complement all of these studies, and students specializing in an historical period or country would benefit from a relevant course in the history of philosophy, such as Greek, Medieval, 17th and 18th Century Philosophy, 19th and 20th Century Continental or Analytic Philosophy, and American Phenomenology and Existentialism could also complement certain specializations.

Religious Studies and Theology

Aside from the Philosophy of Religion course and courses on Christian thinkers, other relevant courses include the History of Philosophy, especially Greek and Medieval, the Philosophy of History, which may cover religious interpretations of history, Philosophy of Language, Epistemology, Metaphysics, Philosophy and Literature, and Phenomenology and Existentialism. The Philosophy of Science is quite valuable for understanding the relationship between science and religion, and the courses in Applied and Theoretical Ethics are relevant for students interested in Religious Studies.

Science and Mathematics

The courses in Logic and the Philosophy of Science have an obvious relevance, but other choices include Epistemology, which is concerned with the conditions and limits of knowledge, Philosophy of Mind, which is especially relevant to students of biology and psychology, Metaphysics, which studies the nature of reality, 17th and 18th Century Philosophy, which provides the philosophical foundation for modern science, and Analytic Philosophy, which treats many problems of science and mathematics.

Internships

John Carroll philosophy students participate in internships in multi-disciplinary fields including administration, journalism, communications, and law as preparation for success upon graduation.

Philosophy Majors & Career Application

Many students choose philosophy as a second major. Your first major likely raises questions about values or methodology that philosophy can explore; so philosophy can deepen and broaden your training in your first major. It can also enhance your intellectual skills -- to question, to think seriously, and to speak clearly. So a second major in philosophy can help prepare you for a profession in your first field, for graduate school, or serve as training for ministry.

In a recent study, it was found that philosophy majors as a group had a higher mean score on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Verbal Section than students in any other major. In addition, only philosophy majors were 5% or more above the mean on all of these tests: LSAT (law), GMAT (graduate management), GRE Verbal, and GRE Quantitative.

The same study concluded that the fact that students with philosophy majors had average scores higher in basic skills than did most other students with majors in other fields of graduate and professional study suggests that philosophy majors are an excellent overall resource for professions and disciplines which demand individuals with solid basic skills. For students with philosophy majors, the basic skills necessary for successful work in philosophy may open professional career doors to unsuspected domains of business and the other professions.

Philosophy should be considered not only by those considering an academic career in the field but also by those who want a sound humanities background for graduate work in many areas and for a variety of careers. Philosophy need not be mentioned in a job description in order for the benefits of philosophical study to be appreciated by an employer or for these benefits to help you advance in a career. People trained in philosophy are prepared for many kinds of tasks, and they can cope with change and move readily into new careers.

Besides teaching philosophy, which isn't for everyone, you could use your philosophical training in many ways. For example, philosophy is an excellent preparation for a career in law; many law schools look favorably on a philosophy major. Also, you could pursue careers in public administration, journalism, health care, communications, and pastoral work.

Philosophy graduates are now successfully pursuing careers in business, government, journalism, law, and medicine. A Philosophy major or minor is universally beneficial since it emphasizes the following skills:

- Analyzing and resolving problems
- Seeing problems from different points of view
- Communicating cogently and persuasively
- Integrating knowledge

These skills are always in demand and never become obsolete.

Notable Alumni

Don Shula, former head coach of the Miami Dolphins, is a JCU graduate of the Class of 1951. His experience studying philosophy as an undergraduate at John Carroll has led him to initiate funding for the Don Shula Chair in Philosophy, which supports the Philosophy Department by presenting programs of interest to philosophers and the general public.

Department Scholarships

- The William J. and Honore M. Selhorst Award provides funding to a junior philosophy major for his/her senior year.
- The Casey Bukala, S.J. award recognizes a graduating senior for excellence in philosophy.
- The Paul Johnson, S.J. Award recognizes distinctive achievement in philosophy by a graduating senior.
- The David Matthew Bonnot Award recognizes and funds a graduating senior who intends to pursue graduate studies in philosophy.

Degrees Offered

- Bachelor of Arts
- Second Major or Minor: Philosophy may also be chosen as a second major or as a minor.

External Courses at the Borromeo Seminary

The Philosophy Department offers a series of Philosophy Courses at the Borromeo Seminary in Wickliffe, Ohio in cooperation with the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. Classes are held at the Seminary's Center for Pastoral Leadership.

Courses Offered

101	Introduction to Philosophy
210	Ancient Greek Philosophy
220	Medieval Philosophy
230	Christian Thinkers
240	17 th and 18 th Century European Philosophy
245	19 th Century European Philosophy
250	Continental Philosophy
255	Marxism and Critical Theory

260	American Philosophy
265	Existentialism and Phenomenology
270	Analytic Philosophy
275	Recent and Contemporary Philosophy
280	Major Moral Philosophers
285	African Philosophy
289	Social and Political Philosophy
290	Major Women Philosophers
298	Special Topics in the History of Philosophy
301	Introduction to Logic
302	Introduction to Ethics
303	Philosophy of Language
305	Philosophy of Education
306	Philosophy of Literature
307	Philosophy of Religion
310	Contemporary Ethical Problems
311	Business Ethics
312	Ethics in Sport
314	Science, Technology, and Ethics
315	Applied Ethics
320	Philosophy of Law
330	Feminist Philosophies
340	Philosophy of History
350	Philosophy of Beauty and Art
360	Symbolic Logic
368	Ethical Theory
370	Philosophy of Social Class
375	Philosophy of Science
379	Philosophy of Mind
380	Philosophy and Latin American Literature
385	Philosophy and the Body
390	Philosophy of Race & Racism
395	Metaphysics
396	Theories of Knowledge
398	Special Topics
425	Philosophy of the Human Person
450	Seminar in Philosophy
495	Senior Thesis
499	Directed Readings

*Please refer to the current University Undergraduate Bulletin for complete course descriptions.

Faculty

Rev. William Bichl, S.J., *Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Chaplain, Campus Ministry and Alumni Relations*
Ph.L. Saint Louis University

Rev. Casimer Bukala, S.J., *Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. Boston College
Specialty: phenomenology and existentialism

Rev. Harry Gensler, S.J., *Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. University of Michigan
Specialty: logic, ethics, and philosophy of religion

Dr. Jonathan Gunderson, *Assistant Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. University of California, San Diego
Specialty: action theory, philosophy of mind, and Kant

Dr. Sharon Kaye, *Associate Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. University of Toronto
Specialty: medieval philosophy, philosophy of religion, nominalism, and voluntarism

Dr. William Langenfus, *Associate Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. University of Wisconsin-Madison
Specialty: ethics and philosophy of law

Dr. Jennifer McWeeny, *Assistant Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. University of Oregon
Specialty: early modern philosophy, epistemology, aesthetics

Dr. Patrick Mooney, *Assistant Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. University of Wisconsin-Madison
Specialty: ancient Greek philosophy, especially Socratic ethics and Plato's metaphysics

Dr. Tamba Nlandu, *Assistant Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. Tulane University
Specialty: Peirce, American philosophy, African philosophy, and philosophy of mind

Dr. Mariana Ortega, *Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. University of California, San Diego
Specialty: continental philosophy and Heidegger

Dr. Earl Spurgin, *Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Specialty: ethics, business ethics, and social and political philosophy

Dr. Dianna Taylor, *Associate Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. SUNY Binghamton
Specialty: continental philosophy and feminism

Dr. Brenda A. Wirkus, *Professor of Philosophy*
Ph.D. University of Ottawa
Specialty: history of philosophy, social philosophy, idealism

For More Information

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