

PHILOSOPHY

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The aim of the Philosophy Department is to engage students in disciplined and imaginative thinking about philosophical issues. Philosophical questions fall primarily into four groups: questions about the nature of reality (metaphysics), about reasoning and inference (logic), about knowledge (epistemology), and about values and society, including moral values (ethics) and aesthetic values. These questions, which arise naturally in the course of a liberal education, are not only fascinating in their own right, they also touch on issues central to understanding and improving human life in our own society and in the world. Because they involve complex and controversial issues, there are no easy answers. Yet it matters greatly which answers are accepted, and it is therefore important to engage in discussion with others who face these questions and to seek to learn from the philosophers of the past and present.

Engaging in philosophy develops skills in careful and fair-minded interpretation, creative but rigorous argumentation, and perceptive, wise evaluation of complex issues. These valuable abilities are applicable to any subject matter and in any human context and are useful for negotiating the ambiguities of today's career paths.

Overview of the Major

A major in philosophy is highly recommended not only for those who wish to pursue graduate study in philosophy but also as preparation for other careers that require the ability to think in a creative and disciplined manner about questions that are new or whose method of solution is debated, including careers in law, theology, business, management, medicine, journalism, politics, and education.

Philosophy majors are encouraged to participate in the student-run Philosophy Forum, to attend special lectures and events sponsored by the department, to explore study abroad programs, and to participate in departmental social events.

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major

Distinction

See Academic Honors

Departmental Distinction is awarded to graduating seniors who have demonstrated excellence in our discipline. This is the highest honor the Department can award. The Department awards Distinction according to the criteria below.

Criteria for Departmental Distinction in Philosophy

The two primary criteria for awarding Distinction are (i) the candidate's GPA in philosophy and (ii) the quality of the candidate's philosophical writing as shown by a portfolio of papers submitted for Distinction. Excellence in philosophical writing is characterized by

- clarity in the statement of a position,
- care in the analysis of an issue,

- cogency of argument,
- overall coherence in statement and argument,
- the range of considerations brought to bear on the issue,
- the imagination, creativity, and style with which all of this is done, and
- the display of intellectual virtues, such as humility regarding what one knows and respect of those with whom one disagrees

Although GPA in philosophy and the quality of philosophical writing are the primary criteria, participation in, or leadership of, extra-curricular philosophy events such as Phil Forum or Phi Sigma Tau may also figure in the Department's evaluation as secondary considerations.

Procedure for Applying

The application for distinction in philosophy shall consist of a portfolio of philosophy papers that are of superior philosophical quality. The portfolio will normally consist of two or three papers that students have written for their courses, at least one of which should be a term paper from a 300-level seminar. Students are encouraged to revise their papers in accordance with the instructor's comments and with the student's further reflection. A paper used in a Distinction portfolio may also be submitted for the Ringstad Prize (but it will need to be submitted separately). Portfolio papers will be evaluated by the Chair and at least one other member of the Department. They will present their evaluation to the Department as a basis for its vote. The Chair will invite all seniors with a GPA in philosophy of 3.5 or higher to apply for Distinction. Seniors with a GPA in philosophy lower than a 3.5 will not ordinarily be considered for Distinction unless there are exceptional circumstances; such students should discuss their circumstances with the Chair before the deadline. The entire sequence of Enduring Questions or Public Affairs Conversation can count towards one elective of the major. So, for students who are counting one of these programs towards their philosophy major, the Department will consider their GPA in their entire sequence of the program as their GPA for the elective course.

Special Resources

The Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf is an internationally acclaimed center for the study of Søren Kierkegaard, the 19th-century Danish philosopher who is widely recognized as the father of existentialism. Every year, researchers from around the world come to the library to participate in its visiting fellows program. It is an invaluable resource for students, too. A number of philosophy students have worked in the library, and seniors and recent undergraduates have participated in the library's fellowship program for young scholars. The library also sponsors *The Reed*, an undergraduate journal of existential thought.

The Eunice Belgum Memorial Lectures are delivered annually by leading philosophers from around the world. Recent lecturers include Jay Garfield, Costică Brădăţan, Meghan Sullivan, Eleonore Stump, Edward Langerak, John Cooper, Charles Mills, and Louise Anthony. Simon Critchley was the lecturer for 2023-2024.

Requirements

The aim of the Philosophy Department is to engage students in disciplined and imaginative thinking about philosophical issues. Philosophical questions fall primarily into four groups: questions about the nature of reality (metaphysics), about reasoning and inference (logic), about knowledge (epistemology), and about values and society,

including moral values (ethics) and aesthetic values. These questions, which arise naturally in the course of a liberal education, are not only fascinating in their own right, they also touch on issues central to understanding and improving human life in our own society and in the world. Because they involve complex and controversial issues, there are no easy answers. Yet it matters greatly which answers are accepted, and it is therefore important to engage in discussion with others who face these questions and to seek to learn from the philosophers of the past and present.

Engaging in philosophy develops skills in careful and fair-minded interpretation, creative but rigorous argumentation, and perceptive, wise evaluation of complex issues. These valuable abilities are applicable to any subject matter and in any human context and are useful for negotiating the ambiguities of today's career paths.

Requirements for the Regular Major

Code	Title	Credits
PHIL 240	Formal Logic	1.00
Three level III seminar courses ^{1,2}		3.00
Four Level II distribution requirements (one in each category)		
I. Metaphysics & Epistemology		1.00
PHIL 231	Philosophy of Mind	
PHIL 241	Philosophical Theology	
PHIL 244	Philosophy of Science	
PHIL 246	Space and Time	
II. Value Theory		1.00
PHIL 243	Aesthetics	
PHIL 250	Biomedical Ethics	
PHIL 251	Science, Ethics, and Religion	
PHIL 252	Ethics and the Good Life	
PHIL 254	Law, Politics, and Morality	
PHIL 256	Friendship, Love, and the Good Life	
PHIL 257	Environmental Ethics	
PHIL 258	Ethics, Economics, and the Marketplace	
PHIL 278	Moral Theory	
III. History of Western Philosophy		1.00
PHIL 235	Ancient Greek Philosophy	
PHIL 236	History of Modern Philosophy	
IV. Expanding Perspectives (satisfied by level II or level III) ³		1.00
PHIL 245	Philosophy and Feminism	
PHIL 249	Asian Philosophy	
PHIL 255	Race and Social Justice	
Elective course ⁴		1.00
Total Credits		9

1

Level III seminar courses may not be taken S/U

2

Policy Concerning PHIL 398 Independent Research (IR) (Adopted 2/12/08)

In special circumstances, an IR course may be substituted for a level III seminar. The circumstances are as follows:

1) the IR must have a special relevance to the student's program of study in the major or integrative major, serving as a capstone experience;

2) by November 1 of the senior year, the student must present a petition to the chair of the philosophy department before registering for spring courses. The petition should include a rationale explaining the special relevance of the project to his or her major. The chair has full authority to grant or decline the petition;

3) no more than one IR course, which must be taken graded, can be used to fulfill the requirement; the other level III course(s) must be seminar courses.

3

PHIL 371, 372, 373, 374, or 375 will count toward the major if devoted to a topic that satisfies category IV Expanding Perspectives.

4

Students who complete the Enduring Questions, Public Affairs Conversation, or Science Conversation receive credit for one elective philosophy course toward the major.

Requirements for the Integrative Major

Code	Title	Credits
Seven courses in philosophy, including: ¹		7.00
Either of the following:		
PHIL 235	Ancient Greek Philosophy	
PHIL 236	History of Modern Philosophy	
Two level III seminar courses in philosophy ^{2,3}		
Three level II or III courses in another department and/or program chosen to complement the work in philosophy ⁴		3.00
Total Credits		10

1

Students who complete the Enduring Questions, Public Affairs Conversation, or Science Conversation receive credit for one elective philosophy course toward the major.

2

The two level III seminar courses in philosophy may not be taken S/U

3

Policy Concerning PHIL 398 Independent Research (IR) (Adopted 2/12/08)

In special circumstances, an IR course may be substituted for a level III seminar. The circumstances are as follows:

- 1) the IR must have a special relevance to the student's program of study in the major or contract major, serving as a capstone experience;
- 2) by November 1 of the senior year, the student must present a petition to the chair of the philosophy department before registering for spring courses. The petition should include a rationale explaining the special relevance of the project to his or her major. The chair has full authority to grant or decline the petition;
- 3) no more than one IR course, which must be taken graded, can be used to fulfill the requirement; the other level III course(s) must be seminar courses.

4

Students must write a rationale that states why the three chosen courses outside of the philosophy department should count toward the philosophy major. Students must submit the rationale to the department chair for consideration of approval.

**By completing this major, the student also satisfies the OLE Core Writing in the Major requirement.*

Integrative Major Form

The Contract Major form can be found here.

Courses

PHIL 117: Confucius, Buddha, and Socrates

Confucius, Buddha, and Socrates are foundational philosophers of the ancient world. Yet, Socrates holds a privileged position in the history of philosophy due to his emphasis on reason, argumentation, and his influence on Plato. In this course students take a comparative approach to the philosophies of these three thinkers with the aim of examining their method of practicing philosophy, analyzing their philosophical theories, and investigating what it is to be a philosopher in each of their cultures. Offered annually.

Prerequisite: first-year student or sophomore standing.

PHIL 118: Knowledge, Reality, and the Self

This course is a historical introduction to philosophy, a discipline which pursues fundamental questions about the nature of reality and our place within it. Students critically engage with philosophical works across multiple periods and perspectives, while developing their own point of view on major philosophical questions. Specific topics vary, but typical examples include: What can we know, and how can we know it? What is a meaningful life? Is reality objective? What is the self? Offered annually.

Prerequisite: first-year student or sophomore standing.

PHIL 119: Moral Psychology

This seminar provides an introduction to philosophy that compares psychological and philosophical approaches to moral behavior and character. The course examines the nature of those states of mind that are thought to constitute moral (or evil) character and produce moral (or evil) actions, relationships, and societies. States considered may include humility, self-respect, beneficence, compassion, caring, anger, forgiveness, courage, and truthfulness. Offered annually.

Prerequisite: first-year student or sophomore standing.

PHIL 120: Philosophy in Literature

Literature provides rich resources for thinking through central philosophical questions, including the metaphysics and ethics of freedom; the problem of evil; the role of character in choice and action; the nature of morality; rebellion and human solidarity; God's existence and relation to the world; and the nature of truth. Designed primarily for first-year students, this course explores philosophical ideas in literary works of several different genres by studying plot, character, point-of-view, imagery, and symbolism. Offered during January Term.

PHIL 121: Conservative Philosophy in History

The course examines significant conservative social and political philosophies of the modern period. What do conservative philosophies want to "conserve" and how do answers to that question distinguish varieties of conservatism (e.g., traditional, libertarian)? What are strengths and weaknesses of conservatism? Students explore key conservative ideas of thinkers like Hume, Adam Smith, Burke, Hamilton, Madison, Tocqueville, Maistre, Newman, Spencer, Oakeshott, C. S. Lewis, Orwell, Kirk, Viereck, Niebuhr, Rand, Nozick, MacIntyre, Wojtyla, Ratzinger, Sowell, Sommers, Scruton. Offered annually.

PHIL 127: Zen and the Art of Judo

Judo is an Olympic sport and martial art widely known for its dynamic throws, slick submissions, and grueling conditioning. However, the founder of judo also intended it to be a system of moral education rooted in the philosophical traditions of Japan. In this course students learn the physical aspects of judo through intensive practice and the philosophical aspects of judo through studying Zen Buddhism and the writings of judo's founder, Jigoro Kano. Offered during January term.

PHIL 140: Myth, Reason, and the Death of the Gods

This course explores tensions between mythical worldviews-in which traditional stories explain things-and rational worldviews-which find explanations in universal laws. Students witness the decline of myth in Greek epics, tragedies, and philosophy. They discover related patterns in Old Testament writings and Lakota myths. The conflict between myth and reason, however, is also part of our world. Students investigate the contemporary meaning of myth with help from philosophers including Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Arendt.

PHIL 225: Introduction to PPE (Philosophy, Politics, and Economics)

This course is an introduction to PPE, an interdisciplinary field that pursues the powerful connections among its three defining disciplines (philosophy, politics, and economics). Students engage with core topics in the field - such as markets, collective action, justice, and public choice - from a variety of ideological perspectives, such as libertarianism, Marxism, liberalism, and feminism. They learn how to integrate different disciplinary approaches in application to both theoretical and policy debates. Not open to first-year students except by special permission. Offered annually during fall semester.

PHIL 231: *Philosophy of Mind*

Is there anything about the human mind that cannot in principle be understood scientifically? Are we just complex physical machines? This course looks at recent attempts to answer such questions. Students examine the philosophical foundations of various approaches to the study of the mind and consider the possible moral and social implications of these approaches with respect to questions of free will, personal identity, and our responsibility for our actions. Offered annually.

PHIL 233: *Kierkegaard and Existentialism*

An introduction to Kierkegaard's work and to existentialism, this course emphasizes the aesthetic, ethical, and religious "stages on life's way." Existential questions concerning the meaning of human existence, passion and faith, freedom and choice, despair, and the absurd are examined. Offered annually.

PHIL 235: *Ancient Greek Philosophy*

This course surveys the origins and development of ancient Greek philosophy from the Presocratics in the 6th century BCE through Plato and Aristotle in the 4th century BCE. Students read and analyze primary texts in translation in order to examine the historical foundations of philosophical issues in cosmogony, natural philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, logic, psychology, and ethics. As time permits, the course may include writings from one or more of the Hellenistic schools of Epicureans, Stoics, and Skeptics. Offered annually.

Prerequisite: one course in philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 236: *History of Modern Philosophy*

This course examines philosophical developments from the 17th through 19th centuries, with a focus on the emergence of a distinctively modern sense of self. We ask what it means to be modern, and how modern science and philosophy have served as both liberating and alienating forces in shaping the world today. We engage canonical European thinkers and philosophical texts, while also highlighting marginalized voices—with significant contributions from women and Black philosophers. Offered annually.

Prerequisite: one course in philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 240: *Formal Logic*

Formal systems of logic attempt to make principles of good reasoning explicit. This course introduces two such systems of logic: propositional and predicate calculus. Students learn to use formal techniques to analyze arguments and explore philosophical issues related to meta-theory, including consistency and completeness, the paradoxes of material implication, ontological commitment, and the interpretation of quantifiers. Offered annually.

PHIL 241: *Philosophical Theology*

This course is a philosophical inquiry into the core commitments of Christian theism in the context of other world religions and naturalism. Central themes include beliefs about the existence and nature of God, the doctrines of the trinity and incarnation, redemption and ritual, human free will and responsibility, revelation and reason, religious experience, the problem of evil, different views of life after death, miracles and historical inquiry, and religious pluralism. Offered annually.

PHIL 242: *Latin American Philosophy*

This course surveys the philosophy of the Latin American world, considering both the writings of philosophers from Latin America as well as philosophical explorations of issues relevant to Latin America. Students explore how issues such as race, imperialism, political emancipation, and postcolonialism have been approached and understood in Latin American contexts. Prior coursework in philosophy or Latin American studies is recommended but not required. Offered periodically in January term.

PHIL 243: *Aesthetics*

A philosophical inquiry into beauty and art. Students investigate the relationship between beauty, goodness, and truth, and examine different accounts of art, its value, meaning, and the standards by which it should be judged. Themes include the nature of creativity, censorship, and the significance -- cultural, moral, and religious -- of art. Offered annually.

PHIL 244: *Philosophy of Science*

Using examples from the natural sciences, this course examines fundamental concepts of science, including scientific method, the nature of scientific theories and hypotheses, objectivity in data collection and analysis, the use of technology in making observations, confirmation versus falsification, and explanation versus prediction. To illustrate why non-scientists need to understand scientific practice the course also considers controversies such as global warming and intelligent design. Offered annually.

PHIL 245: *Philosophy and Feminism*

Students examine feminist critiques of aspects of contemporary culture that shape women's lives, such as conventional morality, science, education, art, medicine, law, religion, and marriage. Students critically examine philosophical views that underlie these institutions, including views of human nature, gender, rationality, knowledge, morality, justice, and the value of autonomy. Alternative feminist views that promote feminist aims are explored and evaluated. Offered periodically.

PHIL 246: *Space and Time*

An exploration of problems about the nature of space and time that are of common interest to philosophers and scientists: Do space and time have boundaries? Are space and time independent of minds and bodies? How are space and time conceived in classical vs. relativistic physics? What is the geometry of space? Is time travel possible? What is God's relation to space and time? Offered during January Term.

PHIL 247: *Selected Topics in Philosophy*

Discussion of philosophical topics of general interest and concern. Topics vary from year to year, and include an introduction to theory of knowledge, philosophy of language, medieval philosophy, American philosophy, and twentieth-century Continental philosophy. Offered periodically.

PHIL 249: *Asian Philosophy*

This course surveys the influential philosophical traditions of India and China. Students explore the major traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, and Taoism and consider other traditions with which they have interacted. Where appropriate, comparisons are drawn to Western philosophical traditions. Offered annually.

Prerequisite: One course in Philosophy or permission of instructor.

PHIL 250: Biomedical Ethics

This course clarifies central concepts and distinctions developed in the literature of moral philosophy and applications of those concepts and distinctions to concrete moral problems that arise in the practice of medicine. Issues may include euthanasia, abortion, medical paternalism, allocation of scarce medical resources, culturally sensitive medical care, pandemics, and conflicts of loyalty in managed care. Readings are drawn from both philosophical and medical discussions. Offered annually.

PHIL 251: Science, Ethics, and Religion

Modern science raises important challenges for ethics and religion. Some are theoretical: can evolutionary and cognitive science be fully accommodated by religious persons and moral realists? Are the arguments for God's existence helped or hurt by modern science? Scientific developments also give rise to practical challenges for ethics. Should we radically enhance human nature? Does neuroscience show that we can't be morally responsible? Should we worry about global catastrophes? Students explore these or related questions. Offered annually.

PHIL 252: Ethics and the Good Life

This course examines the main Western ethical theories and their application to contemporary moral concerns. Theoretical issues may include rights, duties, virtue, hedonism, egoism, the relation between ethics and theology, the fact-value distinction, relativism, and pluralism. Students discuss current topics such as global economic justice, euthanasia, the death penalty, animal rights, censorship, racism, privacy rights versus public safety, reproductive ethics, and environmental ethics. Offered annually.

PHIL 253: Democracy: Rule of the Ignorant?

Democracy is widely regarded as a triumph of liberal civilization. Yet democratic citizens are so often ignorant, irrational, and narrow-minded. Meanwhile, a new wave of populists, elitists, and autocrats are challenging democratic institutions and assumptions. This course explores the moral justifications for democracy in light of major objections and investigates whether there is something genuinely virtuous about the kind of society it sustains. Students discuss sources in philosophy and political science. Offered periodically.

PHIL 254: Law, Politics, and Morality

This course considers the relationships between moral principles, law, and the practice of governments. Topics may include the "Just War" debate, censorship, property rights and distributive justice, natural law, political liberalism and its critics, whether governments should act in accordance with specific moral principles or remain neutral, the tensions between individual rights and the good of the community, and the role of religion in public life. Offered annually.

PHIL 255: Race and Social Justice

This course analyzes issues concerning race and social justice from the perspective of normative ethical frameworks and various theories of value. Students investigate, interpret, and critique both intellectual foundations and reasons for endorsement of the various approaches to study in race and social justice. Students pay critical attention to how the Black intellectual tradition understands the meanings and moral implications of such ideas. Offered annually.

PHIL 256: Friendship, Love, and the Good Life

Moral issues concerning friendship and love are analyzed from the perspective of normative moral theories and various theories of value. Issues may include the role of friendship in the moral life, exploitative versus fulfilling relationships, and the conflict between altruism and self-love. Since loving is itself a form of valuing, value theory is approached by investigating philosophical and theological works concerning the basic types of love: *philia*, *eros*, and *agape*. Offered most years.

PHIL 257: Environmental Ethics

Valuing nature raises significant philosophical and ethical issues. This course considers the nature of animal life, the character and control of pollution, the conflict between preservationism and conservationism, corporate and governmental responsibility for the eco-crisis, the use of economic categories to assess wilderness areas and endangered species, the conflict between eco-holism and individualism, and the philosophy of wilderness management. Offered annually.

PHIL 258: Ethics, Economics, and the Marketplace

Markets are guided not only by economic goals but also by moral values of freedom, fairness, justice, and ideals of the good life itself. Through readings in economics and philosophy, this course explores the relationship between moral and economic values in the marketplace from the ancient world up to the present. Characteristic topics include the status of wealth in a virtuous life, fair trade, economic freedom, pricelessness, and the tension between public and private values. Offered annually.

PHIL 266: Kierkegaard in Copenhagen (study abroad)

This course on Søren Kierkegaard--which takes place in his hometown, Copenhagen, Denmark--moves through some unusual thematic territory. We examine the dialectic of meaninglessness and faith, boredom and passion, solitude and silence; we ask about the joy and pain of embodiment; and we explore forms of love and commitment. Discussions take place in the Danish classroom, but also on-site in the parks, squares, churches, castles, and surrounding forests mentioned in his works.

PHIL 278: Moral Theory

An advanced introduction to moral philosophy emphasizing normative theories, the foundations of morality (metaethics), and moral reasoning. Normative theories (e.g. virtue ethics, deontological ethics, theological ethics, and utilitarianism) explore the nature of the good and the difference between right and wrong. Metaethics concerns the origins and objectivity of moral judgments, studying moral relativism, moral subjectivism, divine command theory, and ideal observer theories. Students explore moral reasoning in theory and practice using contemporary moral issues as examples. Offered periodically.

Prerequisites: one course in philosophy or permission of the instructor.

PHIL 294: Academic Internship**PHIL 298: Independent Study****PHIL 371: Seminar in Epistemology**

Students explore contemporary approaches to classical issues in theory of knowledge which include the nature and limits of knowledge; theories of justification; conceptions of truth; relativism and skepticism; and the standards of knowledge in the sciences, mathematics, history, ethics and religion. Specific issues discussed vary year to year. May be repeated if topic is different. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisites: two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair.

PHIL 372: Seminar in Metaphysics

Students investigate contemporary approaches to classical issues in metaphysics, which include the mind-body problem; personal identity and immortality; space and time; causality; and realism, anti-realism, and truth. Specific issues discussed vary from year to year. May be repeated if topic is different. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisites: two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair.

PHIL 373: Seminar in Ethics and Theory of Value

Students examine contemporary approaches to classical issues in ethics and theory of value: the nature of moral judgments; theories of moral obligation and value; the concept of moral responsibility; and the relation of morality to science, religion, and law. May be repeated if topic is different.

Prerequisites: two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair.

PHIL 374: Seminar in the History of Philosophy

Students consider a selected figure or movement from the history of philosophy. May be repeated if topic is different. May count toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.

Prerequisites: two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair.

PHIL 375: Seminar in Advanced Topical Studies

Students participate in intensive discussion of a philosophical topic selected from areas such as philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, aesthetics, social and political philosophy, and feminism, with emphasis on contemporary approaches. May be repeated if topic is different.

Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy, one of which must be either PHIL 235 or PHIL 236 or permission of the department chair.

PHIL 394: Academic Internship**PHIL 398: Independent Research**

Prerequisite: one level III course in philosophy.

PHIL 399: Senior Seminar

Intended as a capstone course for the major, the seminar studies a selected topic, figure, or movement in philosophy, with emphasis on independent research and student presentations. Consult department's prospectus for details. May be repeated if topic is different. Offered annually.

Prerequisite: upper-level philosophy major or consent of instructor.

Plan of Study

Philosophy Major - Plan of Study

This is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements for the Philosophy major at St. Olaf. This tool is meant as a guide and does not replace working closely with the student's academic advisor.

The philosophy major is extremely flexible and students should therefore work closely with their advisor to choose a path which suits their interests. The outline below offers an approach to the "regular" philosophy major at Saint Olaf, which involves 9 total courses in philosophy. As an alternative, students may also complete the more individualized integrative major, which involves 7 courses in philosophy, supplemented by 3 courses from outside disciplines.

Students should see the Philosophy Department web page for a detailed explanation of the differences between the regular and integrative philosophy majors.

Course	Title	Credits
First Year		
Fall Semester		
FYS 120 or WRIT 120	First-Year Seminar (or Conversation Program) or Writing and Rhetoric	1.00
World Language		1.00
Credits		2
Spring Semester		
WRIT 120 or FYS 120	Writing and Rhetoric (or Conversation Program) or First-Year Seminar	1.00
PHIL 100-level Elective Course		1.00
World Language		1.00
Credits		3
Sophomore Year		
Fall Semester		
PHIL 240	Formal Logic	1.00
History of Western Philosophy Elective Course ¹		1.00
Credits		2
Spring Semester		
Metaphysics and Epistemology Elective Course ¹		1.00
Credits		1
Junior Year		
Fall Semester		
Value Theory Elective Course ¹		1.00
PHIL Elective Course ²		1.00
Credits		2
Spring Semester		
PHIL 300-level Seminar Course		1.00
Credits		1
Senior Year		
Fall Semester		
Expanding Perspectives Elective Course ¹		1.00
PHIL 300-level Seminar Course		1.00
Credits		2
Spring Semester		
PHIL 300-level Seminar Course		1.00
Credits		1
Total Credits		14

1

See the Philosophy Requirements tab for courses.

2

Students who complete the Enduring Questions or Public Affairs Conversation programs may receive credit for one elective Philosophy course toward the major.

Students must successfully complete the equivalent of 35 St. Olaf credits through a combination of full-credit and fractional-credit courses to earn the Bachelor of Arts.

Visit the Philosophy department webpage for more information.

Faculty

Department Chair, 2025-2026**Michael A. Fuerstein**

Professor of Philosophy
social and political philosophy; social epistemology; American pragmatism

Arthur J. Cunningham

Associate Professor of Philosophy

philosophy of physics; philosophy of science; science and religion

Daniel Farnham

Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Jason T. Marsh (on sabbatical J-Term/Spring Semester 2025-26)

Associate Professor of Philosophy

bioethics; ethical theory and applied ethics; religion and cognitive science

Danny Muñoz-Hutchinson

Professor of Philosophy

ancient Greek; Roman philosophy; cross-cultural ancient philosophy

Edmund N. Santurri

Professor of Religion and Philosophy

ethics; philosophical theology

Brian Söderquist

Endowed Kierkegaard Chair in Christian Philosophy

Kierkegaard; philosophy of religion

Anna Strelis Söderquist

Associate Professor of Philosophy and Curator of the Hong

Kierkegaard Library

Kierkegaard; philosophy of literature

Brendon Westler

Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Nicole Yokum

Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy