PHILOSOPHY

The philosophical experience is considered integral to the intellectual and cultural development of today's student. In our increasingly complex and dynamic culture, the growth of novel and changing ideas unsettles traditional patterns of thought and action. As a result, the role of philosophy becomes more vital, for it addresses the conflict between the enduring insights of the past and the new discoveries and theories of the present in an attempt to attain a coherent philosophy of life.

In whatever way the student comes to Philosophy—whether it be to satisfy a core, major, or elective requirement—the department seeks to enrich the student’s life-experience by making available the broad and generous ideas that have shaped the contemporary intellectual world. The program provides a broad range of electives dealing with historical movements, great philosophical figures of the past and present, perennial philosophical themes, and contemporary issues.

Faculty

JESSE BAILEY, PH.D
Assistant Professor

SEAMUS CAREY, PH.D.
Professor

KENNETH KNIES, PH.D.
Assistant Professor

EDWARD PAPA, PH.D.
Associate Professor

ANDREW J. PIERCE, PH.D.
Lecturer

GORDON PURVES, PH.D.
Assistant Professor

MICHAEL VENTIMIGLIA, PH.D.
Associate Professor

Major in Philosophy

The major in Philosophy requires the completion of 30 credits.

REQUIRED COURSES

- PH 101 Introduction to Philosophy
- PH 231 Philosophy of Knowledge
  or
- PH 232 Philosophy of Science
- PH 251 Ethics
- PH 272 Metaphysics
- PH 253 Philosophy of Law
  or
- PH 255 Political Philosophy
  or
- PH 256 Philosophy of Technology
  or
- PH 260 Women, Gender and Philosophy,
  or
- PH 312 Philosophy of Marx (A course in social/political philosophy - others in this area may be designated by the department)
- PH 390 Great Texts in Philosophy

Four Philosophy electives

*Three of the courses must be taken as “research paper by contract,” in which the major will complete a 15-20 page research paper. See your faculty member, advisor, or the chair for more information.

Note: As Sacred Heart University students, all Philosophy majors will take a logic and critical thinking course, typically FLO 125.

Minor in Philosophy

The minor in Philosophy requires the completion of the following 18 credits:
REQUIRED COURSES

PH 101 - Introduction to Philosophy
Five Philosophy electives from 200- or 300-level courses.

Associate in Arts General Studies

EMPHASIS REQUIREMENTS (15 CREDITS)

PH 101 - Introduction to Philosophy
Four Philosophy electives

Course Descriptions

† Elective Core Course

PHCC 104 - The Human Search for Truth, Justice, and the Common Good
3 CR
This course is the capstone course in Sacred Heart University's Common Core sequence of study, The Human Journey. As the capstone, this course addresses the Core’s four fundamental questions of human meaning and value. This course will investigate the religious or philosophical understanding of the human condition as a theme running through the four stated questions. Students will study both classic and contemporary texts from a range of religious and some philosophical traditions, particularly the Catholic intellectual tradition. A vital component of the course will be students’ own responses to the four questions, especially as those responses evolve through the enrichment of the course material. As a capstone course, PHCC104 enables students to develop a personal, integrated set of answers to the common core questions through a range of modalities and media, including service projects, research papers, artistic productions, student “portfolios” of completed assignments for all four Core courses, and other similarly integrated and interdisciplinary work.

†PH 101 - Introduction to Philosophy
3 CR
A first encounter with the fundamental problems of Western philosophy as they have been presented and addressed by outstanding and representative figures from the history of Western thought. These figures pose questions of permanent significance on matters such as the nature of reality, the possibility of knowledge, the nature of the good life, the grounds of moral obligation, and the place of the human being in the universe.

†PH 220 - Logic and the Nature of Rationality
3 CR
Building on the material studied in FLO 125 Art of Thinking, this course explores the question, “What does it mean to be rational?” Features both the formal study of logical systems (first order logic, formal induction, decision theory, and game theory) and philosophical discussions about the connection between these systems and the nature of rationality. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 221 - Historical Survey of Philosophy I
3 CR
Primary texts from the philosophers of ancient Greece, the Hellenistic-Roman period and the Middle Ages. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 222 - Historical Survey of Philosophy II
3 CR
Primary texts from the philosophers of the Renaissance, Enlightenment, Modern, and Contemporary periods. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 224 - Ancient Philosophy
3 CR
An examination of the beginnings of Western philosophic thought from the pre-Socratics through the Hellenistic period, with extensive consideration of Plato and Aristotle. Prerequisite: PH 101
†PH 225 - Philosophy of Plato
3 CR
The nature of the philosophical life is examined through an exploration of selected Platonic dialogues. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 226 - Philosophy of Aristotle
3 CR
Emphasizes the ethics, politics, and metaphysics of the Aristotelian system and its contrast to the Platonic synthesis. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 229 - Eastern Philosophy
3 CR
Study of key philosophical texts and thinkers of India, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 231 - Philosophy of Knowledge
3 CR
The conditions that make knowledge possible and the criteria of truth and falsity. Selected representative historical thinkers. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 232 - Philosophy of Science
3 CR
Selected topics in the philosophy of science are explored, such as: the distinction between science and pseudoscience; the nature of confirmation, refutation, and explanation; realism and antirealism about scientific theories; the possibility of conflict between science, religion, and the law. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 241 - Medieval Philosophy
3 CR
The Aristotelian tradition as developed within Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 245 - Philosophy of Augustine
3 CR
Examines Augustine's contribution to the development of Roman Catholic philosophy and theology. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 246 - Philosophy of Aquinas
3 CR
Thomas Aquinas's arguments on the existence and nature of God, human knowledge, the state, natural and divine law, virtue, grace, and the Incarnation. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 251 - Ethics
3 CR
Are there good reasons for acting morally? Are consequences relevant to the morality of actions, or only our intentions? What is the nature of moral virtue? What is a good life? This course will provide systematic analysis of these and other questions, drawing from important works in the history of moral philosophy, and engaging with pressing contemporary ethical issues. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 253 - Philosophy of Law
3 CR
The philosophical study of the nature of law, the legal system's relationship to natural law, and theories of jurisprudence. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 255 - Political Philosophy
3 CR
Primary texts from the history of political thought including Plato, Lao-Tzu, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Mill and Rawls. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 256 - Philosophy of Technology
3 CR
Examination of the nature of technology, its relationship to science, and its influence on our understanding of reality and ourselves.
Particular metaphysical, ethical, or socio-cultural aspects of philosophy of technology may be emphasized. Prerequisite: PH 101

PH 258 - Bioethics: Philosophical Approaches
3 CR
Examines the ethical and legal issues surrounding abortion, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, genetic cloning, genetic therapy/enhancement, genetic patenting, and health care allocation. Prerequisite: PH 101

PH 259 – Philosophy of Race
3 CR
Investigates the many philosophical issues surrounding race and racial identity. Some issues are metaphysical, such as what races are and whether race is a “real” feature of persons or not. Other issues are moral and political issues, such as what racism is, how it shapes our political landscape, and how societies can combat it.

PH 260 – Women, Gender and Philosophy
3 CR
Philosophical investigation of the ways that sex and gender shape our lives, experiences, and societies. Are there natural differences between men and women? Does our gender provide us with a distinct ethical, political, or epistemological perspective? What does it mean to treat men and women equally? Course places special emphasis on women’s contributions to various branches of philosophy.

PH 270 - Philosophical Anthropology
3 CR
Reflections on the nature and meaning of human existence, especially in contemporary philosophy such as existentialism and Marxism. Writings of Buber and Scheler on human nature are studied. Prerequisite: PH 101

PH 272 - Metaphysics
3 CR
Investigates some of the great themes of European philosophy and the problem of metaphysics as the intellectual inquiry which is supposed to clarify the nature of reality. Topics include: the problems of the one and the many, being and nothingness, change and necessity, the relation between the intelligible world and phenomenal reality, personal identity and free will. Prerequisite: PH 101

PH 283 - Philosophical Theology
3 CR
The problem of God before and after Kant’s “Copernical Revolution,” phenomenology of religion and postmodern theology. Prerequisite: PH 101

PH 284 - Philosophy of Film
3 CR
Uses contemporary films to lead students through advanced philosophical examination of issues such as epistemology, ethics, religion, technology, and the nature of the mind. Prerequisite: PH 101

PH 285 - Philosophy of Performing Arts
3 CR
This course examines the creation, expression, and meaning of the performing arts. Through drama, music, and voice, students will critically analyze the perennial elements and structure of story and its place in uncovering and creating meaning.

PH 299 - Special Topics in Philosophy
3 CR
Designates new or occasional courses that may or may not become part of the department’s permanent offerings. Courses capitalize on a timely topic, a faculty member’s particular interest, an experimental alternative to existing courses, etc. Prerequisites established by the department as appropriate for the specific course. Course
College of Arts and Sciences

†PH 306 - Existentialism
3 CR
Nineteenth- and 20th-century existentialism, especially the thought of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre. Prerequisite: PH 101

PH 307 - Philosophy of Lived Experience
3 CR
Introduces phenomenology as a working method for philosophical reflection on lived-experience. Topics include the distinction between the natural and phenomenological attitudes; the intentional structure of consciousness; the basic analysis of cognitive, evaluative and volitional experience; and the phenomenological critique of naturalism, dualism, and subjective idealism. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 312 - Philosophy of Marx
3 CR
Philosophical foundations of Marx’s thought in Aristotle, Hegel, Feuerbach, and other predecessors. Analysis of Marx’s conceptions of alienation, exploitation, historical materialism, and his critique of liberal political thought. Various philosophical responses to Marxism and evaluation of its applicability to contemporary capitalist societies.

†PH 313 - Contemporary Continental Philosophy
3 CR
Investigation of themes and methods that have emerged in continental philosophy since the mid-twentieth century. Topics may include the hermeneutic and deconstructivist challenges to phenomenology and existentialism, post-humanist approaches to ethics, post-structuralist approaches to society, and the metaphysics of structures and events.

†PH 314 - Truth and Meaning
3 CR
Historical investigation of the nature of meaning and language, with a particular focus on work done since the mid-nineteenth century. Explores the relationship between the meaning of a proposition and the conditions for the possibility of its truth or verification, and the extent to which all meaning and understanding are (or are not) unified into a holistic “conceptual scheme.”

†PH 322 - American Philosophy
3 CR
Engages representative figures from American Transcendentalism and American Pragmatism in the attempt to answer the questions, “How shall I live?” “What can I know?” and “What is real?” Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 330 - East/West Comparative Philosophy
3 CR
Heidegger and East Asian thought, the origin of Greek and Chinese philosophy; the Kyoto school; Nishitani’s Religion and Nothingness. Prerequisite: PH 101

PH 350 - Environmental Philosophy
3 CR
Investigates questions about the relationship between humans and the environment, including: What is the moral status of nonhumans? What are our obligations regarding climate change? Can we have obligations to future generations? How ought we to balance concerns about the economy, the environment, and distributive justice?

PH 351 - Philosophical Psychology
3 CR
Investigates philosophical questions that arise in establishing psychology as a science. Explores field-defining concepts such as soul and mind, as well as particular problems pertaining to the division and connection of
mental phenomena. Specific themes may be emphasized, such as the relation between psychology and physiology, the practical value of psychology, the normal and the abnormal, and the comparability of human and animal.

†PH 360 - Evolution, Philosophy, and Christianity
3 CR
To gain an understanding of evolutionary biology and the philosophical difficulties it creates for Christianity and our understanding of human nature. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 361 - Modern Philosophy
3 CR
European and Anglo-American philosophy from the 17th century Enlightenment to the early 20th century. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 365 - German Philosophical Tradition
3 CR
The philosophical traditions from Germany, from Leibniz in the 17th century through contemporary writers.

†PH 366 - Philosophy of Kant
3 CR
The philosophical writings of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), one of the giants of Western philosophy.

†PH 367 - Philosophy of Hegel
3 CR
The philosophical writings of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), the preeminent philosopher of German Idealism.

†PH 380 - Love in the Western Tradition
3 CR
Examines the idea of love in the Western intellectual tradition, from the Greeks to today. Philosophical problems arising from the scientific study of love and altruism are also investigated. Prerequisite: PH 101

†PH 390 - Great Texts in Philosophy
3 CR
Detailed examination of a single work that has had a significant influence on the history of philosophy. Emphasis on understanding the author’s arguments, methods, and motivations through close reading. The historical background, history of influence, and contemporary appropriation of the text may also be considered. The specific course title which changes annually, will be shown on the student’s transcript. Prerequisite: PH 101