



Philosophy Courses Fall 2025

Compared to other majors, philosophy majors rank at the very top on graduate admissions tests for law school, business school, and others. Their median mid-career salary is above \$80,000 nationally. IU Philosophy graduates have flourishing careers in government, public policy, education, media, medicine, law, business, & more.



Philosophy raises questions about the most familiar things in our lives. A critical examination of our deepest beliefs, it emphasizes questioning assumptions, arguing logically, and thinking things through as completely as possible. Philosophers ask:

- **What should we do? How should we live?** (ethics, social and political philosophy)
- **What kind of world do we live in? What kinds of things are we?** (metaphysics, philosophy of mind)
- **How do we know these and other things? How can we reason better?** (epistemology, logic)

Philosophy teaches skills that are central in virtually any career. Philosophy students learn to: ask intelligent questions, define issues precisely, construct and criticize arguments, expose hidden assumptions, think creatively and independently, see problems from multiple perspectives, and write and speak with precision, coherence, and clarity.

Philosophical training provides the flexibility and perspective needed in a rapidly changing world.

COURSES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:

Gen Ed and/or COLL (CASE) A & H: P105, P106, P135, P141, P145, P150, P200, P201, P240, P242, P301, P312, P340, P345, P370, P401, P470

Gen Ed Natural & Math Sciences: P250

COLL (CASE) Natural & Mathematical Sciences Breadth of Inquiry: P250

COLL (CASE) Global Civilizations & Cultures: P201, P301

College Intensive Writing: P340

PHIL- P105 Critical Thinking — Calum McNamara

Logic is the study of persuasive reasoning and the principal goal of our P105 is to offer students a working knowledge of informal logic at the introductory level. This we separate into three component areas: recognition, analysis, and evaluation of reasoning. In the first, we learn to distinguish reasoning from other forms of communication, among them narratives and causal explanations. Next, in analyzing reasoning, we apply such techniques from logic as argument diagrams to understand the structures of reasoning. Finally, we learn to evaluate reasoning and to improve our own reasoning by employing the important notions of validity and fallacy.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P106 Introduction to Problems of Philosophy: Knowledge, Truth, and Morality — Gary Ebbs

Can we ever know anything about what the world is like or about how we should live? If not, why not? If so, how can we attain this knowledge? This course explores and critically examines a wide range of philosophical answers to these questions. The central goals of the course are to help students learn how to think critically for themselves about what we can know and how we should live and to convey to students a basic knowledge of some key figures in the history of Western philosophy. Readings include texts by influential philosophers who lived long ago, including Plato, René Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill, as well as

articles and book chapters by contemporary philosophers, including Janet Broughton, Rachana Kamtekar, Christine Korsgaard, Michelle Moody-Adams, Adam Morton, Tommie Shelby, and Rachel Singpurwalla.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P106 Introduction to Problems of Philosophy: Mind, Matter, God, (Un)certainity, and Human Flourishing: the Whole Shebang — Tim O'Connor

We will study a few key texts in Western philosophy from ancient to modern times, tracing the perennial conversation among these authors on these questions:

- *Is mind, matter, or something else the most fundamental reality?*
- *Is a good God the source of all things? If so, how does evil and suffering arise?*
- *To what extent is the world around me as it appears to me to be?*
- *What are the scope and limits of what I can know?*
- *What kind of thing am I? Can I survive my death?*
- *What is human flourishing and how can we achieve it?*

With effort, you should improve your abilities to read and accurately digest carefully-reasoned texts; to critically assess the ideas and reasoning in those texts and to formulate alternative proposals of your own backed by reasoning; to engage in friendly and constructive dialogue with others about such ideas; and to write clearly.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P135 Introduction to Existentialism —David Sussman

Existentialism includes a wide variety of philosophical views concerned with what is involved in a person leading a life that is not just good in a general way, but meaningful to her as a particular individual. Supposedly, the central problem of human life is found in the radical freedom we have as self-reflective beings, a freedom that seems to preclude any objective values or reality to the self. Instead, the sort of meaning and reality of human life seems to be irreducibly subjective in some important way, to be found in individual acts of passionate commitment which go beyond and perhaps even flout objective standards of rationality and intelligibility. Our main questions will be how far such subjective self-assertion

and self-creation can depart from rational standards without degenerating into simple nonsense, and whether any kind of existentialism has the resources to support interesting ethical or political positions.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P141 Introduction to Ethics, Theories, and Problems: Moral Theory and its Critics — John Robison

Consider ordinary, moral disagreements: you and I disagree about whether it's okay to eat meat, whether Jamie was disrespectful, whether Quincy is viciously self-centered, whether some outcome was just, or about whether the nurse is morally responsible. In such cases, we don't merely disagree -- we exchange reasons and defend our positions. To that extent, we regularly (perhaps implicitly) invoke and evaluate moral theory. Yet, some are skeptical about this practice: they argue that there are no objective moral truths about which to theorize, that moral theorizing is somehow undermined by science, or that it's too idealized. This course invites students 1) to critically examine such challenges to moral theorizing, 2) to carefully assess purported theories of rightness, value, respect, virtue, justice, and responsibility, 3) to build upon and challenge their own moral outlooks by borrowing and repurposing insights from these theories, and 4) to morally evaluate specific practices, including protest, punishment, and the eating of nonhuman animals. Emphasis is given to cultivating the widely applicable skills of constructing, presenting, developing, evaluating, and revising arguments.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P145 Liberty and Justice — Matthew Adams

This course will serve as an introduction to many of the most central questions of political philosophy. For instance, what is required for a state to be just and its citizens to be free? In exploring these questions, we will identify some theoretical tensions between justice, individual liberty, and equality. We will then bring this theoretical understanding into dialogue with some pressing political questions that arise in the contemporary US; for example, the legal regulation of pornography and the significance of racial discrimination in the criminal law. Texts will be drawn from a diverse array of philosophical traditions, including conservatism, feminism, liberalism, and Marxism.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P150 Elementary Logic — Sadie McCloud

Logic is the study of good reasoning. This elementary logic course covers basic notions of the theory of reasoning, methods for evaluating inferences, and techniques for symbolizing English sentences and arguments in ways that reveal their logical structure. This course will be helpful to students interested in any field – such as law, medicine, or computing – that requires the careful analysis of arguments and reasoning. (Not a prerequisite for PHIL-P 250: Symbolic Logic. Not open to students who have taken or are enrolled in PHIL-P 250.)

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,
COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P200 Problems of Philosophy: Beauty, Taste, and the Work of Art — Sadie McCloud

This course will provide an introduction to topics at the intersection of aesthetics and the philosophy of art. It will focus on questions including: what counts as a work of art? what if any are the essential features of a work of art? What are beauty and ugliness? is it immoral to have bad taste? It will also engage with philosophical questions that arise concerning particular art forms such as conceptual and representational visual art, photography, architecture, fictional literature, and music. The course will be historically informed but will engage with contemporary theories.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,
COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P201 Ancient Greek Philosophy — Katy Meadows

This course focuses on philosophy in the classical Greek world. It is structured around two sets of questions: one concerned with virtue and the good life, and the other concerned with natural science and metaphysics. We'll begin with Socrates, who devoted his life to a search for ethical understanding – and who was willing to die to avoid doing something that he thought was unjust. Socrates's example raises questions about the nature of virtue and its role in a good human life. We'll then turn to the pre-Socratics, who aimed to explain basic features of the universe like coming-to-be and change. The bulk of the course will examine the sophisticated and ambitious theories Plato and Aristotle developed in order to answer these two sets of questions. We'll close with some highlights of Hellenistic thought, briefly surveying Epicureanism, Stoicism and Skepticism.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,
Gen Ed World Cultures,
COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry,
COLL (CASE) Global Civilizations and Cultures.

PHIL-P240 Business & Morality

This introductory-level course will examine an array of ethical issues relevant to business. The topics likely to be covered include: deception, conflicts of interest, workplace issues (diversity in the workplace, sexual harassment, free speech, privacy, safety and other labor issues), exploitation (of workers, of patrons), corporate social responsibility (for example concerning the environment), and whistleblowing. Of particular interest are cases where two important values come into conflict, for example, workers' privacy vs. public safety. We will consider questions both abstractly and concretely. Lecture/discussion format. No prerequisites.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,
COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P242 Applied Ethics

Philosophical investigation and analysis of ethical issues as they arise in a variety of personal, social, and political contexts. Some examples of these include: world hunger, the moral status of animals, friendship, forgiveness, nuclear weapons, social justice, health-care, and life-and-death decisions.

Gen Ed Arts and Humanities,
COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P250 Introductory Symbolic Logic — Sharon Berry

How can we tell good arguments from bad ones? This course is an introduction to formal logic: using formal (symbolic) analysis and other formal methods to help answer that question. We will study the two best known systems of formal logic: propositional logic (also called truth-functional or sentential logic) and some firstorder logic (also called predicate or quantificational logic). Students will learn the language of both systems and how to construct truth-tables, formal proofs, and counterexamples to logical arguments. We will also study how to represent and study natural language arguments within these systems. This course may be of interest to students of philosophy, mathematics, law, and computer science.

General Ed Natural & Mathematical Sciences,
COLL (CASE) Natural & Mathematical Sciences Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P301 Medieval Philosophy — Rega Wood

Medieval Philosophy, focuses on philosophical ethics from the early Christian Roman Empire to the High Middle Ages. This period (350-1350) saw the development of theories of human will, as a locus of

personal identity, freedom, and responsibility. We cover theories of human freedom and motivation and theories of ethics based on reason and agent intention. We begin with Saint Augustine and close with William Ockham who emphasized the intentions of the agent in assessing culpability. By contrast, St. Thomas Aquinas holds that conformity with right reason determines whether an act is praise- or blameworthy. All these philosophers (even Abelard and Ockham whose views were condemned) were committed Christians who must be understood in the context of Medieval Christianity and the cultural history of this millennium. So we must keep in mind that their assumptions and starting points are not our own, as we seek to understand their views and to critically evaluate their arguments.

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry,
COLL (CASE) Global Civilizations and Cultures.

PHIL- M302 Ethics and Responsible Management — John Robison

This course critically examines the ethical dimensions of management within the public and private sectors. Our main focus is on questions about *conflicts of values* and *accountability* as they arise in management contexts. Consider, first, conflicts of values. How—morally—ought concern for integrity, the environment, diversity, safety, privacy and the proper regulation of information and data, and religious freedom inform an organization’s practices? Since these concerns can compete with other organizational goals, how should managers navigate such conflicts of values? Consider, now, accountability. What is it to be accountable for a bad outcome? Who specifically within an organization is accountable for which outcomes and why? Are *organizations*—rather than some individual (s) within them—ever accountable for bad outcomes? Throughout the course, we will engage with philosophical texts, case studies, and codes of conduct used by actual organizations. *Prerequisite: completion of the English composition requirement.*

PHIL- P312 Topics in Theory of Knowledge: Skepticism and Meaning — Gary Ebbs

This course treats skepticism as a tool for clarifying central questions about knowledge, justification, meaning, and truth. We will focus on the so-called *dream argument*: we cannot have knowledge of the external world because we can never rule out that we are dreaming. After a preliminary look at Stroud’s version of the dream argument, we will consider whether ordinary epistemological procedures and/or philosophical theories of justification can by themselves dismiss or refute it. We will then consider whether, and if so, how, philosophical investigations of reference and meaning should change

the way we think about the relationship between our beliefs and the “external” world. Relying on his theory of reference, Hilary Putnam argues that if we are able to entertain the thought that we are brains in vats, then the thought is not true. We try to figure out if his argument is successful.

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P340 Classics in Ethics – Katy Abramson

In this class, we will study some of the major themes in the philosophical ethics of Aristotle, Hume, and Kant. We will unify our study of their disparate works in ethics by trying to think of how each of these philosophers would answer fundamental questions about the justification of our moral practices, the ways in which we are -and fail to be- appropriately motivated to act morally well and develop morally appropriate character traits, and the standards in light of which we ought to assess what it is to act morally well or poorly, to be virtuous or vicious.

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry,
College Intensive Writing.

PHIL- P345 Problems in Social and Political Philosophy: Free Speech, Civil Disobedience, and Political Violence — Matthew Adams

We’ll explore some of the most significant types of political actions that citizens undertake. Key questions include: How should the rights of free speech and civil disobedience be understood and defended? What are the parameters, if any, under which different types of political violence (e.g., terrorism) are justifiable? Readings will be drawn from a diverse array of philosophical traditions and include pieces by Arendt, Goodin, and Rawls. We will also look at work by constitutional legal scholars and examine actual legal cases such as Texas v. Johnson.

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P352 Logic and Philosophy — Calum McNamara

This course will be a fast-paced survey of formal methods that are used in contemporary philosophy. In the course, you’ll be introduced to topics like set theory, the mathematics of infinity, possible worlds, modal logic, probability theory, and decision theory—all things that come up frequently in contemporary philosophy. In addition to learning basic concepts and results in each of the areas mentioned, you’ll get instruction on how to write formal, mathematical proofs. You’ll also gain mastery of the formal methods mentioned by working with other students on collaborative problem sets. Prerequisite: PHIL-P 250 or consent of instructor.

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P366 Philosophy of Action – Kirk Ludwig

What is the difference between something's happening to one (e.g., falling out of bed), on the one hand, and one's doing something, especially doing something intentionally (e.g., fixing breakfast), on the other? What is the difference between, on the one hand, a collection of people pursuing their individual activities (e.g., variously studying at the library, having dinner, walking home, exercising at the gym, and so on), and, on the other, their doing something together, especially doing something together intentionally (e.g., having a conversation, playing basketball, attending a lecture, or performing a ballet)? This course will be concerned with these two questions, the one about the nature of individual action and individual agency, and the other about the nature of collective action and collective agency.

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P370 Topics in Philosophy: Special Topics: Who Should Rule and Why? Plato and Aristotle on Governance — Katy Meadows

The best system of government was hotly contested in ancient Greece; and while classical Athens was a democracy, classical Athenian philosophers examined it (like all political systems) with a critical eye. This course will consider Plato's and Aristotle's views about who should rule and why, with a special focus on their views about democracy. We will begin with Plato's *Apology*, which dramatizes the choice democratic Athens makes to put Socrates to death. We'll then turn to Plato's *Republic*, which ranks democracy as the second-worst political system, and to Plato's last work, the *Laws*, which argues that the best political system is a mix of monarchy and democracy. We'll conclude with Aristotle's taxonomy of true and deviant political systems in the *Politics*. Throughout, we'll be interested in understanding and assessing Plato's and Aristotle's views about what justifies an individual or group's claim to political rule.

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P401 History of Philosophy: Special Topics: Kant's Critique of Pure Reason — Allen Wood

Immanuel Kant saw human reason as inevitably driven to ask questions it is unable to answer. In his attempt to understand this problematic situation, Kant's Critique of Pure Reason remade modern philosophy by drawing the line between what we can and cannot know. Kant's critique has been the model for a wide variety of philosophical positions that explore the mind's contribution to knowledge of the world. By 'critique', Kant meant the process by which our reason both justifies our limited knowledge against skeptical challenges and

exposes the errors of our attempts to extend our knowledge beyond its proper boundaries. It is a critique by pure reason on pure reason: its aim is self-knowledge and the self-assessment of its own powers and limits. Kant's project both grounds the modern project of empirical natural science and explores those metaphysical questions about the soul, the world and God which the critique shows to be unanswerable by us. This course will look at Kant's many-sided and ambitious philosophical project.

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- P470 Special Topics in Philosophy: The Reactive Attitudes — Katy Abramson

There are a special set of emotional attitudes through which we hold people (including ourselves!) responsible for their character and conduct. These emotional attitudes include anger, contempt, resentment, indignation, forgiveness, gratitude, guilt, shame and certain forms of love. Anger, for instance, is commonly experienced not just as the feeling that someone has been wronged, but as the feeling that wrongdoer owes the wronged party an apology, contrition, or reparation. In this course, we will study such attitudes both in general (as a category), and individually, seeking a better understanding of each of the individual attitudes, and trying to understand as well what role these attitudes play in our moral lives.

COLL (CASE) Arts & Humanities Breadth of Inquiry.

PHIL- X490 Readings in Philosophy

This class requires the consent of the instructor, and 9 credit hours in philosophy. Intensive study of selected authors, topics, and problems. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 credit hours.

PHIL- P498 Honors Thesis Directed Research

First half of the honors thesis sequence. Training in skills necessary for original philosophical research. Goals are to achieve appropriate mastery over a body of philosophical material relevant to the honors thesis project, and to develop core ideas for a successful honors thesis. Required: Philosophy GPA of 3.5. Interested students should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies for more information at phildus@iu.edu.

Next Steps: Enjoyed an introductory-level Philosophy course? Consider P201 Ancient Greek Philosophy or P211 Early Modern Philosophy (core historical courses offered once per year), P242 or P246, P250 Symbolic Logic, or any 300-level course.

*For more information contact the Department of Philosophy at: phil@iu.edu.
www.philosophy.indiana.edu*



For more information, see our website: philosophy.indiana.edu

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PHILOSOPHY
THINK FOR YOURSELF.