The Greek philosopher Socrates once said that the unexamined life is not worth living. For more than 2,000 years, philosophy has been the source of the most intensely reflective, influential and argued versions of that examination. The concerns of philosophy range from the arts, the methods and foundations of the sciences, politics, education, and religion to the complex questions relating to the meaning of reality, truth, values and the significance of human history. The study of philosophy is an essential dimension of a well-educated person.

Philosophy seeks to establish standards of evidence, provide rational methods of resolving conflicts, and create techniques for evaluating ideas and arguments. Philosophy develops the capacity to see the world from the perspectives of other individuals and other cultures; it enhances one’s ability to perceive the relationships among the various fields of study; and it deepens one’s sense of the meaning and variety of human experience.

Toward these ends the program in philosophy at Texas A&M is structured to provide students with the skills necessary to appreciate more fully the central concerns of human existence and develop abilities in problem-solving, communication, persuasion, writing, and critical thinking.

Students, along with parents and friends, often assume that the only undergraduates who major in philosophy are those who intend to pursue graduate degrees in philosophy, theology and law. The breadth of skills developed, however, makes the study of philosophy appropriate for students entering professional fields such as medicine, business and education, and for those preparing for graduate work in the humanities or the social sciences.

It should be stressed that the non-academic value of a field of study must not be viewed mainly in terms of its contribution to obtaining one’s first job after graduation. Students are understandably preoccupied with getting their first job, but even from a narrow vocational point of view it would be short-sighted to concentrate on that at the expense of developing potential for success and advancement once hired. Factors leading to initial employment are not necessarily those that lead to promotions or beyond a first position. This is so because the needs of many employers alter with changes in social and economic patterns. It is therefore crucial to see beyond the specifics of a job description.

As this suggests, there are people trained in philosophy in just about every field. They have gone into not only such professions as teaching, medicine, and law, but also into computer science, management, publishing, sales, government service, criminal justice, public relations, and other fields.

Majors

- Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

Courses

PHIL 111 Contemporary Moral Issues
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
( PHIL 2306) Contemporary Moral Issues. Representative ethical positions and their application to contemporary social problems.

PHIL 205 Technology and Human Values
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Interaction of personal and societal values with technology and man's self-image, the future and value change.

PHIL 208 Philosophy of Education
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Basic social ideas and concepts of human nature in Western civilization; their implications for theories of education.

PHIL 240 Introduction to Logic
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
( PHIL 2303) Introduction to Logic. Introduction to formal methods of deductive and inductive logic including, but not limited to, truth-tables, formal deduction and probability theory.

PHIL 251 Introduction to Philosophy
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
( PHIL 1301) Introduction to Philosophy. Perennial problems of philosophy such as the existence of God, the mind/body relationship, the limits of knowledge, the foundations of moral judgment, man and the state.

PHIL 252/AFST 252 Introduction to Hip-Hop Philosophy
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Introduction to philosophy by way of the major themes and subjects of Hip-Hop; critical advocacy of various philosophical ideals.

Cross Listing: AFST 252/PHIL 252.

PHIL 283 Latin American Philosophy
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Major philosophers in the history of Latin American philosophy, such as Unamuno, Ortega y Gasset, Vasconcelos, Caso and Gutiérrez.

PHIL 285 Directed Studies
Credits 0 to 4.0 to 4 Other Hours.
Directed studies in specific problem areas of philosophy.

Prerequisite: Approval of department head.

PHIL 289 Special Topics in...
Credits 1 to 4.1 to 4 Lecture Hours.
Selected topics in an identified area of philosophy. May be repeated for credit.

Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 291 Research
Credits 0 to 3.0 to 3 Other Hours.
Research conducted under the direction of faculty member in the department of philosophy and humanities. May be taken two times for credit.

Prerequisites: Freshman or sophomore classification and approval of department head.

PHIL 305 Philosophy of the Natural Sciences
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Critical analysis of scientific methods and achievements; the nature and types of explanation, discovery and confirmation, models and theories.

Prerequisite: 3 hours of philosophy other than PHIL 240.

PHIL 307 Philosophy of the Social Sciences
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Nature and objectivity of the social sciences, their paradigms and patterns of explanation.

Prerequisite: 3 hours of philosophy other than PHIL 240.
PHIL 314 Environmental Ethics
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Moral basis of duties to preserve or protect plants, animals and environmental systems; foundations of environmental law and policy; the idea of nature in philosophy; critique of social and economic analyses of environmental values.
Prerequisite: Sophomore classification or approval of instructor.

PHIL 315 Military Ethics
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Major ethical issues in modern military practice: ethics of leadership, just war theory, killing of the innocent and the moral status of the rules of war.

PHIL 320 Philosophy of Mind
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Relation of mind to body, nature of thought and knowing, the free will problem, death and immortality.
Prerequisite: 3 hours of philosophy other than PHIL 240.

PHIL 330 Philosophy of Art
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Theories of artistic creation and aesthetic response as exemplified in art forms such as painting, music, poetry, architecture, dance, theater, sculpture and motion pictures.

PHIL 331/RELS 331 Philosophy of Religion
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Philosophical problems of Western religion such as the existence of God, the problem of evil, types of theism, rational, empirical and mystical approaches to God.
Cross Listing: RELS 331/PHIL 331.

PHIL 332 Social and Political Philosophy
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Metaphysical commitments and political theory, the nature and proper ends of the state, freedom, equality, authority, and justice, considering such writers as Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Dewey.
Prerequisite: 3 hours of philosophy other than PHIL 240.

PHIL 334 Philosophy of Law
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Traditional legal issues such as definitions of law, relationship between law and morality, and punishment considered from a legal perspective.
Prerequisite: Junior or senior classification.

PHIL 341 Symbolic Logic
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Elementary symbolic logic beginning with propositional calculus and first order predicate logic, and their applications.
Prerequisite: PHIL 240.

PHIL 342 Symbolic Logic II
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Advanced topics in logic such as the theory of identity, higher order logics, logic of sets, elements of modal logic.
Prerequisite: PHIL 240 or PHIL 341, or approval of instructor.

PHIL 351 Theory of Knowledge
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Major topics in epistemology such as the problem of induction, perception theory, memory and the problem of other minds.
Prerequisites: 3 hours of philosophy.

PHIL 352/AFST 352 Africana Philosophy
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Presentation of the seminal ideas of several influential Africana thinkers; recovery of the neglected traditions in which these thinkers locate themselves. May be taken three times for credit.
Prerequisite: Junior or senior classification or approval of instructor.

PHIL 353/AFST 353 Radical Black Philosophies of Race and Racism
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Critical evaluation of white supremacy, colonialism, and the modern construction of race; examination of the historical background for contemporary theories of race.
Prerequisite: Junior or senior classification or approval of instructor.

PHIL 361 Metaphysics
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Topics concerning the fundamental nature of reality such as what exists, the mental and the physical, universals and individuals, space and time, God.
Prerequisites: PHIL 240 and 3 hours of philosophy.

PHIL 371 Philosophy of Literature
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Philosophical analysis of the major recurrent themes in world literature including fate, the meaning of tragedy, death, odyssey, good and evil, time and eternity, hope and salvation; works selected from a variety of cultures and historical periods.

PHIL 375 Philosophy of the Visual Media
Credits 3.2 Lecture Hours. 2 Lab Hours.
Aesthetic, ethical and epistemological issues of photography, cinema and video.

PHIL 376/FILM 376 Philosophy, Film and Evil
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Application of philosophical methods and analyses to the medium of film; survey of various depictions and treatments of evil within the genre of science fiction; investigation of depictions and treatments of evil arising from consideration of human encounters with alien others.
Prerequisite: Junior or senior classification.

PHIL 381 Ethical Theory
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Values and conduct such as moral relativism, self-interest, utilitarianism, rules, nature of valuation, ethical language and argumentation.
Prerequisite: 3 hours of Philosophy other than PHIL 240.

PHIL 409/WGST 409 Studies in Gender and Philosophy
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Analysis, from a gender-studies perspective, of a single figure or concept in the history of philosophy. May be repeated 1 time for credit with a different focus.
Prerequisites: 3 hours in philosophy and women's and gender studies; junior or senior classification.

PHIL 410 Classical Philosophy
Credits 3.3 Lecture Hours.
Major philosophers from 600 B.C. to the end of the third century A.D. including the Pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hellenistic and Roman philosophy and the Neo-Platonists.
PHIL 411 Medieval Philosophy  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
Major philosophers from the early Christian centuries through the 14th century, emphasizing such writers as Augustine, Aquinas, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.

PHIL 412 Seventeenth-Century Philosophy  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
Significant seventeenth-century texts in metaphysics, epistemology, moral psychology, and political philosophy; authors such as Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Locke.  
Prerequisite: Junior or senior classification or approval of instructor.

PHIL 413 Eighteenth-Century Philosophy  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
Significant eighteenth-century texts from philosophers such as Berkeley, Rousseau, Hume, and Kant.

PHIL 414 Nineteenth Century Philosophy  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
Contributions of such philosophers as Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Husserl, Mill and Bradley.  
Prerequisite: 3 hours of philosophy.

PHIL 415 American Philosophy  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
The thought of philosophers such as Peirce, James, Royce, Santayana, Mead, Dewey and Whitehead.  
Prerequisite: 3 hours of philosophy other than PHIL 240.

PHIL 416 Recent British and American Philosophy  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
Major philosophers in contemporary Anglo-American thought such as Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, Ayer, Quine, Austin and Ryle.  
Prerequisites: PHIL 240.

PHIL 417 Phenomenology  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
Phenomenology from its nineteenth-century origins to the present; authors such as Brentano, Husserl, Scheler, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Henry, Marion.  
Prerequisites: Junior or senior classification.

PHIL 418 Existentialism  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
Existentialism from its nineteenth-century origins to the present; philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Buber, Rosenzweig, Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Camus.  
Prerequisite: PHIL 412 or 413; junior or senior classification or approval of instructor.

PHIL 419 Current Continental Philosophy  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
Major thinkers concerned with "postmodern" topics in hermeneutics, poststructuralism, critical theory, deconstructionism, contemporary Marxist strategies, semiotics and feminist theory.  
Prerequisite: Junior classification or approval of instructor.

PHIL 424 Philosophy of Language  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
The nature of language; the various uses of language and their philosophical import; the nature of meaning, truth, reference and issues surrounding formal representations of natural languages.  
Prerequisite: Junior classification or approval of instructor.  
Prerequisite: PHIL 240 and 3 additional hours of philosophy; junior or senior classification or approval of instructor.

PHIL 464/RELS 464 Modern Jewish Thought and Philosophy  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
An overview of modern Jewish thought and philosophy spanning Jewish European thinkers from the 18th century to the 20th century.  
Prerequisite: Junior or senior classification.  
Cross Listing: RELS 464/PHIL 464.

PHIL 480 Medical Ethics  
Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.  
Critical analysis of major ethical issues in medicine including truth telling, confidentiality, paternalism, genetics, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia and social justice in health care.

PHIL 482/ENGR 482 Ethics and Engineering  
Credits 3. 2 Lecture Hours. 2 Lab Hours.  
Development of techniques of moral analysis and their application to ethical problems encountered by engineers, such as professional employee rights and whistle blowing; environmental issues; ethical aspects of safety, risk and liability; conflicts of interest; emphasis on developing the capacity for independent ethical analysis of real and hypothetical cases.  
Prerequisite: Junior classification.  
Cross Listing: ENGR 482/PHIL 482.

PHIL 484 Professional Internship  
Credits 0 to 6. 6 Other Hours.  
Practical experience in an institutional or organizational setting appropriate to analysis and understanding of issues in some area of applied philosophy. May be taken five times for credit.  
Prerequisite: Approval of instructor and department head.

PHIL 485 Directed Studies  
Credits 0 to 6. 6 Other Hours.  
Directed studies in specific problem areas of philosophy.  
Prerequisite: Approval of department head.

PHIL 489 Special Topics in...  
Credits 1 to 4. 1 to 4 Lecture Hours.  
Selected topics in an identified area of philosophy. May be repeated for credit.

PHIL 491 Research  
Credits 0 to 3. 3 Other Hours.  
Research conducted under the direction of faculty member in the department of philosophy and humanities. May be taken two times for credit.  
Prerequisites: Junior or senior classification and approval of dean of college.

PHIL 497 Independent Honors Studies  
Credits 1 to 3. 3 Other Hours.  
Directed independent studies in specific philosophical problems.  
Prerequisites: Junior or senior classification either as Honors students or with overall GPR of 3.25; letter of approval from head of student's major department.