

Philosophy

The philosophy curriculum gives students the opportunity to understand and to answer the most important questions of human existence: How do we know what we know? What does it mean to exist? Is there a Supreme Being? What is a human being? What are ethical ways to live? What is the meaning of life? With particular focus on the perennial philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, who built the foundations of the Catholic intellectual tradition in philosophy, the major assists students in integrating personal experience with philosophical reflection, as these thinkers did.

Career Opportunities

The most obvious career path in philosophy is graduate school and then professorship. However, philosophy students generally excel at a variety of skills, including critical and higher-order thinking, finding key concepts in the midst of complex information, evaluating ideas, clarifying ethical dimensions, and communicating effectively. As a result, our majors have succeeded in graduate schools in many disciplines, especially law school. In addition, philosophy students have found that these skills have contributed to their success in whatever field they enter.

See the Graduate section (<http://catalog.mtmercy.edu/archives/2015-16/graduateprograms>) of this *Catalog* for more information on Graduate programs offered at Mount Mercy.

Major in Applied Philosophy

This major provides a flexible framework for students interested in philosophical questions. The applied philosophy major emphasizes critical thinking and practical ethics, and thus is designed to be a useful second major, which becomes the area of 'application' for interdisciplinary study in the student's senior research.

The philosophy faculty must approve all programs in applied philosophy. The approval procedure requires that each student complete a plan for the major which must explain the reasons why he/she is undertaking this program and include a list of the courses to be taken in philosophy and from other departments.

Major

PL 141	Logic	3
PL 269	Introduction to Ethics	3
PL 270	Introduction to Asian Thought	3
PL 310	Special Topics: Applied Ethics	3
PL 400	Senior Independent Research and Writing	3
6 additional semester hours in philosophy courses, at least 3 of which are numbered above 200		6
9 semester hours in approved courses from another department or other departments, 6 of which are numbered above 200		9
Total Hours		30

Philosophy Minor

PL 141	Logic	3
PL 269	Introduction to Ethics	3
PL 310	Special Topics: Applied Ethics	3

6 additional semester hours of philosophy electives, at least 3 of them numbered above 300	6
One upper division theory course from the student's major ¹	3
Total Hours	18

¹ Approval from philosophy advisor required

Courses

PL 141 Logic: 3 semester hours

This course offers a combination for skills in a critical thinking, introductions to two types of formal logic, and a survey of informal logical fallacies, all with the aim of finding uses for those skills in real life. The goal for the class is to develop the ability to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful arguments by learning the structure for good thinking and evaluation the quality of evidence used to support an argument. There are no prerequisites.

PL 172 Chinese Thought and Culture: 3 semester hours

This course introduces students to the thought and culture of China from earliest times through the twentieth Century. The main focus is on the three great streams of Chinese thought: Confucianism, Daoism (Tao-ism) and Buddhism. The course emphasizes the role of these philosophies/religions in the social-political life and on the artistic expressions (from calligraphy to film) for the peoples of East Asia. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PL 251 Introduction to Western Philosophy: 3 semester hours

This course introduces students to the origin of the western philosophical tradition. It traces the development of Western philosophy for Socrates to its first Christian expressions and examines the contribution made to Western culture by the philosophers of the classical period, especially Plato and Aristotle. Discussions focus on applying the insights of classical philosophers to contemporary issues. Both primary and secondary sources will be used. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PL 261 Introduction to Philosophy of the Human Person: 3 semester hours

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of human nature. It examines some major theories that treat the nature of the human person. Such key issues as knowledge, freedom, immortality, and person are discussed. Pre requisite: sophomore standing.

PL 269 Introduction to Ethics: 3 semester hours

This course is an introduction to the philosophical discipline of ethics. Among the topics covered are: the nature of ethical inquiry, theories of happiness, an analysis of moral activity, the growth of personal moral character, differing approaches to normative evaluation (such as duty ethics and consequences ethics), and selected moral problems. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PL 270 Introduction to Asian Thought: 3 semester hours

This is an introductory survey of the general philosophical themes of Indian, Chinese, and Japanese thought. Classical and contemporary sources will be studied. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PL 310 Special Topics: Applied Ethics: 3 semester hours

This course applies ethical theories to areas of work-related and social morality. We will examine the ethical responsibility of professional and several codes of professional ethics. We also will analyze select problems from the areas of business ethics, biomedical ethics, environmental ethics or other areas of contemporary interest. This course may be repeated if the area of application differs. Prerequisite: PL 269 or its equivalent.

PL 322 Philosophy of Art & Beauty: 3 semester hours

This course explores areas in aesthetics from a philosophical point of view, with an emphasis on relating aesthetics consistently to other philosophical concepts. Areas of discussion can include whether or not there is an objective basis for claims about art and beauty, definitions of art and beauty, qualities of an artist, and various aesthetic theories throughout the history of philosophy and art. Prerequisite: Completion of the core curriculum requirement in philosophy.

PL 360 Special Topics in the History of Philosophy: 3 semester hours

This course is an examination of important philosophical problems or issues. Course content will vary according to student interest. This course with different content may be repeated. Prerequisite: completion of the core curriculum requirement in philosophy.

PL 371 Contemporary Thought: 3 semester hours

This course is a critical study of how philosophers today have attempted to comprehend our humanness and our place in the universe. This course emphasizes the insights of contemporary philosophers into the unique problems of our time. Prerequisite: completion of core curriculum requirement in philosophy.

PL 375 Faith and Reason: 3 semester hours

This course examines issues in the philosophy of religion and application of the techniques of philosophical investigation to problems in Judeo-Christian and ecumenical theologies. Topics include argumentation for and against God's existence,. Various conceptions of the Godhead, the problem of Evil, the problem of truth and religious language, the question of the afterlife, a philosophical perspective on the nature of faith, Devin Revelation and religious experience. Prerequisites: Completion of the Core curriculum requirements in both philosophy and religious studies and at least a junior standing.

PL 400 Senior Independent Research and Writing: 3 semester hours

This is the capstone course for the major in applied philosophy. Students are required to write a philosophical paper on the topic of "My Personal Ethical Philosophy and My On-going Search for Truth" as an integral part of the capstone experience. Students are also required to do independent research using both primary and secondary sources and to apply their own philosophical reflection in writing a major paper. This course is open only to students majoring in applied philosophy. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.

PL 445 Philosophy Independent Study: 3 semester hours

Independent study under faculty guidance of selected topic. Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.