

# PHILOSOPHY

The Philosophy Program seeks to instill in students a regard for a reasoned approach to the solution of perplexing issues, a heightened critical sense, and a degree of philosophical detachment which allows the student to gain a broader perspective on problems of pressing concern. Coursework in philosophy is excellent preparation for the study of law, the ministry, government service, business, and other careers in the liberal arts.

Students must have an overall GPA of at least 2.0 required in the major and minor.

**Note: Students must complete a minimum of 120 credits in order to graduate with a Bachelor's degree.**

## Programs Bachelors

- Philosophy, BA (<http://catalog.smsu.edu/academic-programs-degrees/philosophy/philosophy-ba/>)

## Minors

- Philosophy, Minor (<http://catalog.smsu.edu/academic-programs-degrees/philosophy/philosophy-minor/>)
- Religious Studies, Minor (<http://catalog.smsu.edu/academic-programs-degrees/philosophy/religious-studies-minor/>)

## Faculty

Brett Gaul (<https://www.smsu.edu/directory/?d=employee&name=00003270#individualTables>)

## Undergraduate Courses

### PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy Credits: 3

Philosophy is a subject that studies the most fundamental questions in life: How should we live? Is there a God? Do we have free will? What does it mean to know something? What can we know? What makes something morally right? What is the nature of good and evil? This course introduces students to some influential philosophical thinkers and some of the most important issues in philosophy.

**Goal:** Goal: 06- Humanities/Fine Arts

**Fall:** Department Discretion **Spring:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00160385/>)

### PHIL 101 Critical Thinking Credits: 3

Introduction to the fundamentals of critical thinking including argument analysis and argument construction. Study includes deductive, probabilistic, and moral argumentation as well as recognition of fallacies. No previous study of logic is necessary.

**Goal:** Goal: 06- Humanities/Fine Arts

**Fall:** Department Discretion **Spring:** Department Discretion **Summer:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000727/>)

### PHIL 103 Ethics Credits: 3

This course is an introduction to ethical philosophy. Possible inquiry includes questions about how one should live, how we should treat others, how we should conceive of our communities, and what components are involved in making a moral choice. A philosophical analysis will provide a framework for discussing contemporary moral problems.

**Goal:** Goal: 09- Ethical/Civic Resp

**Fall:** All Years **Spring:** Department Discretion **Summer:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000728/>)

### PHIL 105 Ethical Issues in Business Credits: 3

This course focuses on business issues through an introduction to ethical theories and their applications within the business setting. Topics of discussion include corporate responsibility, whistleblowing, employee rights, product liability and safety, ethics and marketing, business and the natural environment, affirmative action and diversity, and ethics and multinational corporations.

**Goal:** Goal: 09- Ethical/Civic Resp

**Fall:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000729/>)

### PHIL 107 Environmental Ethics Credits: 3

Analyzing the complex relationships between humans and the natural environment raises some of the most challenging and important questions that we face. Students will study some of the classic and contemporary readings in the field of environmental ethics in order to start to reason for themselves about the proper principles that should guide our actions. Possible topics include the moral standing of non-human animals and inanimate nature, the conceptual divide between nature and culture, the use of animals in research and agriculture, the genetic modification of organisms, duties to future generations, and sustainability.

**Goal:** Goal: 09- Ethical/Civic Resp 10- People/Environment

**Fall:** Department Discretion **Spring:** All Years

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000730/>)

### PHIL 201 Aesthetics Credits: 3

An examination of beauty in the fine arts; the creative process, evaluation, analysis of the work of art, appreciation, and criticism.

**Goal:** Goal: 06- Humanities/Fine Arts

**Spring:** Even Years

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000731/>)

### PHIL 230 Philosophy of Religion Credits: 3

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the area of Western philosophy known as Philosophy of Religion. Possible areas of study include: Arguments for Gods Existence, Arguments from Religious Experience, The Problem of Evil, Attributes of God, The Question of Miracles, The Intersection of Faith and Reason, Science and Religion, and Religion and Ethics. This course is designed for Philosophy majors and non-majors alike who are interested in the philosophical analysis of religious matters.

**Goal:** Goal: 06- Humanities/Fine Arts

**Fall:** Department Discretion **Spring:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00002228/>)

**PHIL 240 Philosophy East and West Credits: 3**

This course will examine classic philosophical questions concerning the nature of the self; interpersonal, social, and political relationships with others; and the fundamental nature of reality as they are articulated in dominant Asian philosophical traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, as well as influential Western philosophical thinkers. Critical attention will be paid to the difficulties, nuances, and responsibilities involved in the pursuit of cross-cultural and comparative philosophy.

**Goal:** Goal: 08- Global Perspective

**Fall:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00002720/>)

**PHIL 250 Philosophy Through Film Credits: 3**

Philosophy is a subject that studies the most fundamental questions in life. This course examines various philosophical topics through the medium of film. Possible topics to be discussed include philosophical analysis of films and texts, the problem of perception, philosophy of mind, ethics, philosophy of time, free will, foreknowledge, and determinism, philosophy of religion, death, and the meaning of life.

**Goal:** Goal: 06- Humanities/Fine Arts

**Spring:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00181413/>)

**PHIL 286 Topics in Philosophy Credits: 1-4**

A study of different topics in philosophy. See current course schedule for topic listing when offered.

**Fall:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000735/>)

**PHIL 292 Honors Credit in Philosophy Credits: 1**

An independent study course designed primarily for Honors Program students. This course allows more in-depth or comprehensive study or research by certain students concurrently enrolled in at least one other Philosophy course.

**Fall:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000736/>)

**PHIL 303 Ethical Issues in Professional Life Credits: 3**

This course builds upon the research, critical writing, information literacy, and persuasion skills developed in ENG 151 by examining the broad range of ethical issues and dilemmas that occur in professional life. The term professions refers to very specialized knowledge or expertise that serves the public good. Professionals have particular duties and responsibilities. Students will learn about the duties and responsibilities of their intended careers by reading articles about important issues in professional ethics, studying their fields Code of Ethics, and writing about ethical issues in professional life. Topics to be discussed include: the meaning of profession, how to be ethical, professional duties, honesty, privacy, confidentiality, integrity, loyalty, whistle-blowing, professionalism, justice, social welfare, governmental regulations, and conflicts of interest. As in the other Ethics courses in the Liberal Education Program, students will also be encouraged to think about the difference between ethical decisions and non-ethical decisions, how they make ethical decisions, and who will be affected by those ethical decisions.

**Pre-Requisite :** ENG 151 OR EMLS 151

**Goal:** Goal: 01- Communication

**Fall:** Department Discretion **Spring:** All Years

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00147648/>)

**PHIL 310 The Philosophy of Sex and Gender Credits: 3**

This course is an introduction to issues in philosophy relating to sex and gender, including questions about what it means to identify and be identified as male or female, and how gender structures social and personal realities. The course reviews different kinds of feminist critiques of Western philosophy and their counter-arguments, as well as philosophical analyses of sex and gender as they relate to ethics, social philosophy, theories of human nature, and theories of knowledge. The course gradually works toward positive theories of sex and gender, including biological determinism and post-modern approaches to the body, and explores contested norms of gender equality in contemporary issues. No philosophy background is assumed.

**Goal:** Goal: 07- Human Diversity

**Fall:** Department Discretion **Spring:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00160427/>)

**PHIL 322 Medical and Bioethics Credits: 3**

The course would explore ethical dilemmas that occur in the professional practices of medicine, biological research, nursing, public health, and the social and behavioral sciences. Its theoretical foundation is philosophical moral theory and its methodology emphasizes the philosophical skills of analysis, argument, and evaluation. The assessment of value involves critical scrutiny of medical practices and biological techniques, some historical, and some of which are unprecedented in human history. As a society, we continue to struggle with questions about what constitutes fairness and goodness in the pursuit of health, and we are on the cusp of developing medical techniques that promise to forever change our understanding of the good life. Emerging from the philosophical branch of ethics, and premised on the three moral principles of respect for autonomy, beneficence, and justice, the aim of this course is to expose students to ethical debates in health care and biological research, and to help them assess moral dilemmas that occur in the practice of medicine and biological research.

**Goal:** Goal: 09- Ethical/Civic Resp

**Fall:** Department Discretion **Spring:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00153777/>)

**PHIL 330 History of Philosophy: Ethics Credits: 3**

This course is a historical survey of major ethical systems. Students will critically engage with the constantly evolving discussions regarding the foundations of right and wrong, the distinction of good and evil, and the questions of moral character. Possible historical figures covered include Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Virginia Held.

**Goal:** Goal: 09- Ethical/Civic Resp

**Fall:** Even Years

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00001662/>)

**PHIL 331 History of Philosophy: Social & Political Philosophy Credits: 3**

This course is a historical survey of social and political philosophy.

Readings and discussions are organized around the fundamental questions of what is justice and what makes a just society. Students will critically examine concepts such as equality, fairness, community, and reciprocity, and apply them to issues such as private property, the family, the distribution of wealth and power, taxation, and forms of government. Possible historical figures covered include Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, John Stuart Mill, Martin Luther King, Jr., John Rawls, and Virginia Held.

**Goal:** Goal: 09- Ethical/Civic Resp

**Fall:** Odd Years

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00001663/>)

**PHIL 340 Logic Credits: 3**

This course examines the formal rules of logical thought, including elements of classical and modern symbolic logic.

**Goal:** Goal: 04- Mathematical/Logical Reasoning

**Fall:** Even Years

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000739/>)

**PHIL 386 Studies in Philosophy Credits: 3**

In-depth study of a particular philosopher, school, or movement; may be repeated.

**Fall:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000740/>)

**PHIL 432 History of Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality Credits: 4**

This course is a historical survey of major works in metaphysics and epistemology, the fields that cover foundational questions about the nature of reality and claims of knowledge. Students will further develop their writing, research, and critical thinking skills by examining questions such as: What is the nature of reality? Is this the only reality that exists? Could the universe be different than it is? Are mind, body, and spirit different substances? What is truth? What is knowledge? How can we acquire knowledge? Can we trust our senses, or should knowledge derive from pure thought? Possible historical figures covered include the pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Rene Descartes, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, W.V.O. Quine, and Richard Rorty.

**Spring:** Even Years

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000741/>)

**PHIL 486 Topics in Philosophy Credits: 1-4**

A study of different topics in philosophy. See current course schedule for topic listing when offered.

**Fall:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000742/>)

**PHIL 494 Independent Study Credits: 1-4**

An independent study course designed primarily for Philosophy students. This course allows more in-depth or comprehensive study or research by certain students concurrently enrolled in at least one other Philosophy course.

**Fall:** Department Discretion **Spring:** Department Discretion

Course Outline (<https://eservices.minnstate.edu/registration/rest/rcld/0075/curricld/00000743/>)