

SAMPLE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR W/ HONORS

AY 18 Third Class		AY 19 Second Class		AY 20 First Class	
Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020
CSC1 OR PY300 Philosophical Methods	CSC2 OR PY305 Logical Reasoning	PY325 Military Ethics	PY305 Logical Reasoning	PY326 Cyber Ethics	PY329 Topics in Ethics
		CSC1 OR PY300 Philosophical Methods	CSC3 OR PY380 20th Century Philosophy	PY345 Philosophy of Religion	PY369 Eastern Thought
				PY360 Ancient Phi- losophy	PY350 Philosophy of Science
				PY490 Thesis Research	PY400 Senior Seminar in Philosophy
					PY491 Senior Thesis

Complementary Support Course Tracks

History

Law

Psychology

Literature and Language

Strategic Studies

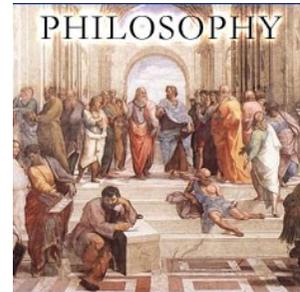
Politics

Cultural Studies

THE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

Program Director: Professor Richard Schoonhoven (x2485)

The scope of Philosophy is much wider than the areas of Ethics and Just War theory studied in PY201. Besides Ethics, Philosophy investigates the very nature of human knowledge; the relationship between mind and matter; and fundamental principles of the kind that underlie religion, science, and politics. The study of Philosophy also has a significant cultural dimension. It challenges us to understand attitudes, beliefs, and arguments from societies more or less remote from our own: the Greek and Roman world; the classical age of Asian thought; 17th Century European thought in its adjustment to modern science; and American contributions to our understanding of traditional philosophical problems. Doing Philosophy is a superior example of Critical Thinking at work, thanks to the high value it places in all its courses on systematic investigation, conceptual analysis, and cogent reasoning.



West Point's Philosophy major is designed to ensure breadth and to encourage depth. It also provides opportunities to pursue further study in the ethics of war. A Philosophy major with Honors enables a cadet the opportunity for close, careful, and creative study of a topic during two semesters under the guidance of a thesis director or committee. The intellectual skills and experience fostered by studying Philosophy are beneficial to the Army. The future officer in whom these skills take root will be an asset to any branch. For the individual, the study of Philosophy forms part of an examined life.

Required Courses:

PHILOSOPHICAL METHODS (PY300)

This course provides cadets the methodological tools required to analyze and understand the important moments and topics in philosophy, developing the philosophical language necessary for success within the philosophy curriculum. Through the study of philosophy within the western tradition, cadets will learn about major developments in logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, among other areas. This background provides the foundational knowledge required of a philosophy major.



Required Courses (cont.):

LOGICAL REASONING (PY305)

This course blends two areas of study that are often kept separate in university courses on logic: informal logic and formal (or symbolic) logic. Informal logic emphasizes natural language arguments, rules of valid inference (called traditional logic), and the identification of mistakes in reasoning that make arguments logically weak though possibly persuasive (fallacies). By contrast, formal logic builds a symbolic representation of sentences and arguments, describes rigorous tests for determining whether symbolized arguments are valid, and provides the means to assess arguments of far greater complexity than the rules of traditional logic can manage. Although symbolic logic may *look* like mathematics, it is really a useful means for examining sentences and arguments solely in terms of their logical meaning, much as x-ray machines enable a skillful eye to examine skeletons. The course will make some attempt to connect these two approaches to logic instead of leaving them in a state of tension or contrast or emphasizing one at the expense of the other.



SENIOR SEMINAR (PY400)

This course provides cadets with the opportunity for advanced study in the discipline. Through the advanced study of a topic in philosophy, cadets will build on the foundation established in PY300 and throughout their academic career at West Point. They will deepen their mastery of philosophical concepts and methods and grow as scholars by applying those concepts and methods to a number of different disciplinary perspectives. Through intensive study of primary and secondary texts, this course broadens the knowledge base by bridging disciplinary approaches and setting the stage for cadets' continued educational development.

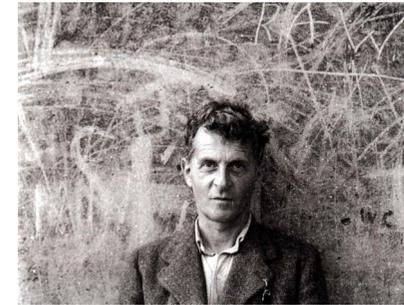
PHILOSOPHY ELECTIVES

KANT & 19th-CENTURY PHILOSOPHY (PY375)

Kant is arguably the most important philosophical figure in the modern era. This course examines Kant's reactions to early modern philosophy and explains his enormous innovations in epistemology, metaphysics, and political and ethical thought. Paying special attention to Kant's influence, the course also examines major philosophical movements in the 19th century. These movements might include idealism (both in Germany and Britain), pragmatism, utilitarianism, existentialism, and the late-century birth of analytic philosophy. Hegel, Marx, J. S. Mill, William James, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and G. E. Moore are possible subjects of close study.

20th-CENTURY PHILOSOPHY (PY380)

Join with the thinkers of the famous Vienna Circle or engage Sartre and the existentialists in engaging the philosophical ideas of the 20th Century. This period saw an entire



host of new views and fields emerge in the discipline of Philosophy. We'll explore the rise (and sometimes fall) of major new movements such as Logical Positivism, Naturalism, Existentialism, Pragmatism, and the Philosophy of Language. Some of the important philosophers we'll meet include A. J. Ayer, Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, Sartre, Heidegger, Charles Pierce, and John Dewey.

INTER-DEPARTMENT SEMINAR (PY390)

This course brings together a senior faculty member from DEP and one other department with cadets majoring in those two departments with the aim of conducting a joint investigation of an important topic or cluster of topics, or the work of a single author, of recognized significance and shared interest. It will be taught every other year, on each occasion combining Philosophy with another discipline. Examples of second disciplines include History, Political Theory, Psychology, and Law. Examples of topics include justice, philosophies of history, the evolution of human rights theory, the relationship between morality and law, cognition and mental phenomena, and evolving conceptions of citizenship. Examples of single author investigations include Locke, Rousseau, Hume. The course will count as credit towards the major in both of the paired departments.

PHILOSOPHY ELECTIVES

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY (PY360)

The ancient Greek philosophers gave Western culture its central ideas about humanity, science, ethics, and politics. You will examine the exciting theories about human nature and the nature of reality that set philosophy on its thoughtful way, including the works of such luminaries as Heraclitus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Epicurus, and the Early Christian philosophers who sought to develop a rational framework for their faith. You will also examine some current scholarship on these philosophers, with an eye toward learning how and to what extent philosophy has changed, and how it is done today.



EASTERN THOUGHT (PY369)

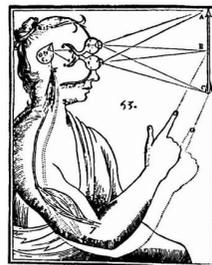


In seeking understanding of the Eastern way, you will explore diverse primary sources such as the *I Ching*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, *The Analects*, the *Bhagavadgita*, the *Tao Te Ching*, and the *Code of the Samurai*. We will study the philosophical significance of the ideas, images, symbolism, and methods of understanding in systems of thought like Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Attention to C. G. Jung's conception of archetypes of the collective unconscious and to his com-

mentaries on some of these classics may move us from the unconscious to the conscious. We may practice divination as described in the *I Ching* (what does the future hold?) and then analyze its philosophical importance.

17th- & 18th-CENTURY PHILOSOPHY (PY370)

This course examines a selection of texts written by central figures in the formative centuries of modern European philosophy. Their ideas have had continuing influence on philosophers down to our present day, as well as profound influences on the development of political thought and the scientific understanding of human beings. Two schools of thought will be covered: Rationalism and Empiricism. Associated with the first school are the continental philosophers Descartes (widely accepted as the founder of Modern Philosophy), Spinoza and Leibniz. The school of Empiricism includes the British philosophers Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume.



Required Courses (cont.):

Cadets majoring in Philosophy must take either PY310 or PY320. Whichever course is not taken as required can be taken as an elective.

REALITY AND KNOWLEDGE (PY310)

At some point we all want to know what is—and how we know it. Addressing those very questions, PY310 tackles the problems of ultimate reality (metaphysics) and human knowledge (epistemology). Are we really free, or are all of our actions determined? Do we have souls or spirits that survive after our death, or are we just material bodies with complex brains that in the end disintegrate? Is there life after death? If those metaphysical questions seem tough, what will you do with these epistemological puzzles? Can you know anything for certain? What does it mean to say you know something? How can you justify your beliefs? By the end of the course, you will be able to articulate your own view of what is and how you know what is. Your roommate will be impressed.



OR

ETHICS (PY320)

This course offers a systematic examination and comparison of standard Ethical doctrines as well as an analysis of some of the fundamental concepts and assumptions belonging to the nature of ethical thinking itself (Meta-ethics). The ethical doctrines to be studied include those associated with renowned philosophers such as Aristotle (virtue theory), Kant (deontology), and Mill (utilitarianism). The focus will be not only on original texts which advance the doctrines but also on criticisms and defenses of them by contemporary philosophers. The texts of Meta-ethics to be studied belong to the analytic tradition of Philosophy and concern the meaning and status of normative language in general. PY320 provides a worthwhile background cadets may apply in any course in applied Ethics, such as PY325 Military Ethics and PY326 Cyber Ethics. It will also prove useful to cadets in other academic majors, particularly in Political Theory, Law, and History.

PHILOSOPHY ELECTIVES

Distribution Requirements:

Distribution Requirements for the Philosophy major are met by taking at least TWO electives from the Historical area (PY360-PY389) and at least THREE from the Sub-discipline areas (PY310-PY359). The electives are taught in a two-year cycle.

MILITARY ETHICS (PY325)

This course builds within the framework of Just War Theory introduced in the core course, PY201. The central concepts include justified responses to aggression, proportionality in the use of force, the rights of non-combatants, and the moral (as distinguished from legal) responsibilities of soldiers and their officers. PY325 works with



these concepts in three creative ways. The course traces the underlying ethical principles of Just War Theory; it applies these principles to the contemporary context of asymmetrical warfare, such as found in the Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan, and it examines case studies of situations requiring officers to make moral decisions under combat pressure within the fog of incomplete or conflicting information.

CYBER ETHICS (PY326)

This multi-disciplinary course will examine the current ethical, social and legal issues related to cyberspace, with a particular focus on: (1) the regulation or regulability of cyberspace; (2) the inherent tensions between traditional government surveillance and public safety efforts, and the growing necessity for strong cyber security practices; (3) the ethical concerns surrounding government secrecy; (4) privacy and anonymization in cyberspace; and (5) cyber weapons and cyberwar.



TOPICS IN ETHICS (PY329)

This course provides cadets an opportunity for reading and analysis in depth of some of the seminal philosophical works in ethics. Taught in seminar format, the course challenges first-class and second-class cadets to take responsibility for discussion and analysis and for drawing connections between ideas as they occur throughout history and across cultures. The cadets will gain a deeper understanding of the human condition and of the complex world of values.

PHILOSOPHY ELECTIVES

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (PY330)

Combine contentious recent election campaigns, a controversial war, and a labyrinthine debate about what globalization means. What do you get? A great setting for philosophical investigation into the nature of justice, rights, liberty, equality, and other central political ideas. In PY330 we will haul classical and contemporary political theories before the tribunal of logic and experience. The effort will help us better to understand our political choices and ourselves.

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (PY345)

What are the arguments for and against the existence of God? How can a good God allow the presence of evil? Are miracles possible? Is there life after death? Is it rational to believe in God, or does faith demand the suspension of reason? Is there a necessary relationship between ethics and religion? Is there a single true religion? If these questions have ever intrigued you, you already know that you need this course, in which you will confront the words of the Oxford philosopher Anthony Kenny: "If there is no God, then God is incalculably the greatest single creation of the human imagination." Real or imagined, what subject could be more compelling than God?

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE (PY350)

It has long been acknowledged that mathematics and the natural sciences provide knowledge of the world—if any disciplines do. But "the" scientific worldview has proved suspiciously unstable, thanks to Darwin, Einstein, and quantum theory. In PY386 you will roam the halls of science and learn how the structure was built. Knowing the equation is critically important, of course, but understanding the processes that led to our search for the equation provides insight into the whole scientific enterprise. Take this course to understand science better.

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (PY355)

A mind is a terrible thing to waste. It's also a very difficult thing to understand. How can there be room for conscious beings in a world apparently composed of physical stuff and governed by physical laws? Are minds supernatural entities, souls that lie beyond the reach of science? Or are minds just very complicated physical structures? What is the relationship between psychology and physics, or psychology and computer science? Could a properly designed computer think? Could it experience emotion? This course—properly designed and loaded with emotion—will help you and your mind attempt to find plausible answers to fundamental questions.

