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ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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- Course Plan / Sample Four-Year Program for Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy / Minor in Philosophy / Individual Class Descriptions
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Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy
Minor in Philosophy
- The Philosophical Life**
- The value of a philosophy degree stems from the richness of the perennial themes that are addressed in philosophical texts and discussions. Majors in this department balance their studies of the great classical themes of philosophy with a focus on the particular philosophical issues that are of paramount importance to them. In designing the department major, care has been taken to emphasize both the historical and analytical dimensions of philosophy, as well as its theoretical and practical dimensions. In this regard, the Department of Philosophy believes that the Socratic dictum "Know thyself!" requires the exercise of both theoretical and practical reason. The design of the major expresses this fundamental belief.
- In its historical dimensions, an education in philosophy gives the student a nuanced appreciation of the wide array of conceptual systems that human beings have employed to deal with questions concerning reality, justice, truth, morality, and the meaning of life. In its analytical and critical dimensions, philosophy trains one to detect and avoid errors in thinking. Such training involves special emphasis on the logical use of language, the analysis of concepts, and the ability to critique and construct extended arguments.
- Philosophy's emphasis on both the imaginative and critical use of rationality helps prepare one for a wide variety of careers that require finely honed reasoning and communication skills. Such fields include law, medicine, social and political advocacy, counseling, teaching, print and electronic media, and research and writing in both academic and nonacademic fields.

Faculty and Curriculum

At the heart of the philosophy program is the faculty: highly individual philosophers who represent key approaches to philosophy, and who are actively engaged in ongoing research and exploration. The curriculum is expressly designed not only to provide the major with needed methods and historical perspectives, but also to bring students into contact with a broad spectrum of approaches to philosophy.

Advising

Advising begins with an initial advising interview with the department chair. During the following semester the student will choose a regular faculty advisor.

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

A major in philosophy involves a core of courses required of all majors, one senior seminar, and 18 elective units in philosophy chosen by the student. Core courses provide overviews of the major areas of philosophy, whereas elective courses may be more specialized or experimental in content and method.

Degree Requirements	Units
General education	51
Major requirements:	
Core (24), Electives (18)	42
General electives	27
Total units needed for graduation	120

Major Core Requirements

PHIL 101 Critical Thinking (these GE C1 units do not count for the major) (3)	
PHIL 102 Introduction to Logic	3
PHIL 120 Introduction to Philosophy	3
PHIL 202 Proseminar	3
PHIL 302 Ethics and Value Theory (these GE C3 units do not count for the major) (3)	
PHIL 290 Great Thinkers of the West: Thales to Occam	3
PHIL 295 Great Thinkers of the West: Hobbes to Kant	3
PHIL 305 Epistemology	3
PHIL 310 Metaphysics	3
PHIL 400 Senior Seminar	3
Total units in the major core	24

Teaching of senior seminars rotates among full-time department members, and at least one is offered each semester. PHIL 400 may be repeated twice for credit when the subject matter and instructor are not repeated.

In exceptional cases, the Philosophy Department permits the design of an individual major. A proposal for an individual major must be approved by three members of the full-time faculty selected by the applicant. These three faculty members shall constitute the student's major committee.

The major requirement is thus 42 units: 24 core units and 18 units of electives. Students may petition for elective units to be transferred in from outside the department.

Sample Four-year Program for Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

Freshman Year: 30 Units

Fall Semester (15 Units)

PHIL 101 (A3) or
ENGL 101 (A2) (3)
PHIL 102 (A3) (3)
GE (6), Electives (3)

Spring Semester (15 Units)

ENGL 101 (3)
PHIL 102 or PHIL 101 (3)
GE (6)
Electives (3)

Sophomore Year: 30 Units

Fall Semester (15 Units)

PHIL 202 (3)
PHIL 290 (3)

Spring Semester (15 Units)

PHIL 295 (3)
GE (6)

HUMS 200 (3) Electives (6)
 GE (3)
 Electives (3)

Junior Year: 33 Units

Fall Semester (15 Units)

PHIL 305 (3)
 PHIL 302 (C3) (3)
 Philosophy Elective (3)
 GE (6)

Spring Semester (18 Units)

PHIL 310 (3)
 Philosophy Electives (6)
 GE (6)
 Electives (3)

Senior Year: 27 Units

Fall Semester (16 Units)

PHIL 400 (3)
 Philosophy Elective (3)
 GE (3)
 Electives (6)

Spring Semester (15 Units)

Philosophy Electives (6)
 Electives (6)

Total semester units:

120

Additional GE and Course Information

- This schedule assumes that you come in as a freshman ready to take college-level English and math classes.
- One of the B1 and B3 courses you take must be a science lab.
- You must take an ethnic studies class. You may receive philosophy elective credit and ethnic studies credit for CALS 352 Chicano/Latino Philosophy or NAMS 346 Philosophic Systems.
- You must take 9 units of upper-division general education. If your catalog year is before Fall 1994, you may receive upper-division GE credit for CALS 352 or NAMS 346 and for PHIL 302, which are all in Area C. If your catalog year is Fall 1994 or later, you must spread your 9 upper-division GE units among three of the five GE areas. The department recommends POLS 315 Democracy, Capitalism and Socialism for GE Area D5.
- Nine of your GE units must be taken in residence at Sonoma State.
- UNIV 301, War and Peace, counts as elective credit toward the B.A. degree in philosophy.
- SSCI 305, Perspectives on the Holocaust and Genocide, counts as elective credit toward the B.A. Degree in philosophy.

Minor in Philosophy

The minor in philosophy consists of 18 units chosen by the student in consultation with a department advisor. No more than 6 of these 18 units may be lower-division GE courses. The minor track in philosophy may be designed to emphasize pre-law, pre-med, pre-business, critical thinking, and other applied areas and/or pre-professional programs. Consult the department chair for further information.

Philosophy Courses (PHIL)

Classes are offered in the semesters indicated. Please see the Schedule of Classes for most current information and faculty teaching assignments.

Lower-division courses are designed to provide the student with fundamental background information and skills. Non-majors who wish to take upper-division electives are encouraged to take 6 units of lower-division course work in philosophy before taking upper-division courses.

101 Critical Thinking (3) Fall, Spring

Critical thinking is the best defense against intellectual trickery and self-delusion. It provides specific techniques and tools whereby we can avoid basic fallacies in our own thinking and detect them in the thought of others. Reasoning is a highly complicated human activity and cannot be

satisfactorily studied in an intellectual vacuum. Hence, in this course, critical and uncritical thought are contrasted in the context of the world of human interests and activities - social, political and scientific. All of the basic "tricks" for persuading people to accept false premises and conclusions as true are systematically laid out and their detection practiced. Satisfies GE, category A3 (Critical Thinking).

102 Introduction to Logic (3) Fall, Spring

An introduction to the nature of contemporary systems of logic and their application. Students will learn how to abbreviate arguments in ordinary language, to deduce conclusions, and to locate fallacies. Recommended for students of the sciences, computer programming, or mathematics, and the general student interested in the structure of arguments. Satisfies GE, category A3 (Critical Thinking). CAN PHIL 6.

120 Introduction to Philosophy (3) Fall, Spring

This course provides an introduction to some of the enduring questions of thinking: What is the nature of knowledge, of morality, of justice, of the self, of religion, of the search for wisdom, of reality? Topics and approaches may vary from section to section. Consult the department office for current information. Satisfies GE, category C3 (Philosophy and Values).

200 Philosophical Issues (3)

Students practice the techniques of reading and thinking critically, of expository writing, and of oral expression as they reflect together on philosophical issues. Recent topics have included Human Consciousness, Foundations of Greek and Chinese Thought, and Philosophical Issues in Global Climate Change. As students read and discuss the semester's topic, they will reflect consciously on the principles of thinking, speaking, and writing. This skills-oriented course reflects the assumption that we master skills more thoroughly when we are working on an interesting set of issues that are significant and relevant to our lives. Prerequisites: completion of GE categories A2 and A3.

202 Proseminar (3) Fall

This course is designed to help students acquire the skills required to successfully major or minor in philosophy, skills such as making effective oral presentations or critically evaluating demanding philosophical texts. The course will be based on an investigation of important contemporary or historical problems, and attention will be paid to both analytic and continental approaches to these problems. Possible topics of discussion are: postmodern critiques of science; moral relativism; arguments for the existence of God; the good life; the nature of emotions; the nature of beauty. Topics will vary from year to year depending on the interests of faculty. Prerequisites: current philosophy major or minor, or permission of instructor.

290 Great Thinkers of the West: Thales to Occam (3) Fall

An introductory survey of the great thinkers of Greece, Rome, and Medieval Europe, from Thales and Heraclitus, to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and on to Augustine, St. Francis, and Aquinas. We trace the emergence of philosophy in the Ancient World, its flowering in the "Golden Age" of Greece, and its decline in the Hellenistic period, followed by the quest for a new synthesis of Greek, Roman, and Biblical elements in Medieval thought and culture.

295 Great Thinkers of the West: Hobbes to Kant (3) Spring

Study of modern philosophy, from the dualism of Descartes to the atomistic empiricism of Hume and Locke, and then to the great Kantian synthesis at the start of the contemporary era. This survey emphasizes the basic and political epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical positions developed in this period, which lay the foundations for contemporary Western philosophy, culture, and common sense. A knowledge of modern philosophy is crucial for assessing the phenomenon of post-modernism.

302 Ethics and Value Theory (3) Fall and Spring

An introduction to the philosophical analysis of ethics, morality and values, and a survey of the various systems of moral philosophy. The course covers such issues as: What is the good life? What considerations are relevant to making moral decisions? Are moral principles universal, or relative to a given society? How, if at all, can moral judgments be justified or moral disagreements

resolved? Satisfies GE, category C3 (Philosophy and Values). Consult Schedule of Classes for topic to be studied. May be repeated (with a different focus) for credit.

303 Social and Political Philosophy (3)

A philosophical examination of the Western tradition of social and political thought. The course will discuss topics such as justice and the ideal society; the question of justified revolution; the role of private property; freedom, individual rights and social welfare; different forms of government; and the role of values in political deliberation.

304 Science and Engineering Ethics (3)

What are the value implications of the actions of professional engineers and scientists? How do we determine moral responsibility amongst the teams of engineers and scientists who are responsible for tragedies such as the Discovery and Challenger disasters or the Kansas City Hyatt-Regency Hotel walkways collapse, or the Exxon Valdez oil spill? In this course the student will look at actual case studies and learn to apply various theories in ethics and morality to the decision making process encountered in science and engineering today.

305 Epistemology (3) Fall

In every academic discipline and in everyday experience, we make claims to knowing a variety of things. The course asks whether, and what, we really know and how we know it. In the process of answering the question we address: the definition(s) of knowledge; the nature of belief and justification; skepticism about knowing (whether we can know that we know); criteria for knowing; types of knowing; influences on knowing; and the uses (and abuses) of knowledge.

310 Metaphysics (3) Spring

Classically, metaphysics included "first philosophy," or the question of the ultimate nature of reality. In the 20th century, the term has begun to focus on the implications of our uses of language. It thus includes such questions as: What is the view of what exists implied by ordinary language? What happens when formal languages, or alternative conceptual schemes, imply that different objects exist? Are there minds, or just mental activities? What does science teach us about reality? What role might religion play?

311 Introduction to Cognitive Robotics (3)

The field of Cognitive robotics presents us with profound philosophical questions. Can robots be used to model or replicate human cognitive functions? How would robust robotic artificial intelligence change the world we live in? What would it mean to be human in a fully automated world? To begin to answer these questions we will create simple mechanical reasoning devices and discuss their relevance to philosophical theories of life and mind. We will use LEGO beams, plates, gears, motors, and a RCX micro controller board programmed in the LEGO or NQC (Not Quite C) language along with various sensors and motors to construct small autonomous robots. These robots will be used to try to re-create and explore the strengths and weaknesses of some recent experiments in the field of cognitive robotics.

313 Science, Technology and Human Values (3)

Science and Technology impact every aspect of our lives. What does it mean to live in such a world? Is science and technology value neutral or do the choices made in these fields of study cause us to accept certain ways of life over others? How will advances in science and technology change our views on personal identity, privacy and property? How do we make appropriate choices as a society among rival technologies or scientific theories? Do the humanities have any role to play in the development of new scientific theories or technologies? We will explore these and other topics while surveying the important works in this field from relevant points of view within the Western and non-Western traditions.

314 Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy of Mind (3)

This course is an introduction to contemporary philosophy of mind. Its main emphasis will be on the conflict between computational and biological approaches to the mind. Possible topics of discussion are: Can a machine think? Is thinking mere symbol manipulation? How do our thoughts manage to be about things in the world? What is the nature of consciousness? Can the mind be reduced to the brain?

315 Existentialism (3)

An examination of existential accounts of the human condition. The course's focus can vary. Typically it will address themes such as authenticity, anxiety, and the absurd nature of life. The class is likely to cover class European existentialists such as Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Ortega, Camus, and Sartre.

325 Philosophy of Nature (3)

Ideas from environmental ethics, environmental aesthetics, political philosophy, the philosophy of science, and the history of philosophy will be used to shed light on the diverse ways in which human beings have interacted and continue to interact with nature. In addition, the course will require students to develop an understanding of the personal significance of nature for them. Possible readings might include Thoreau's *Walden*, Emerson's *Nature*, Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*, and Bugbee's *Inward Morning*. The course will include becoming knowledgeable about and participating in local environment concerns.

330 Studies in 19th Century Philosophy (3)

A study of major figures and themes in European philosophy after Kant: Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Mill, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, the foundations of existentialism, utilitarianism, and Marxism. Emphasis will vary from semester to semester.

338 Philosophy of Emotion (3)

A philosophical study of emotion, raising definitional, epistemological, metaphysical, and value questions about emotion. The course includes the study of particular emotions, such as love, compassion, fear, and pride, and makes use of information about emotions from the sciences and social sciences.

340 Buddhist Philosophy (3)

This course provides a chronological survey of Buddhist thought, from the teachings of the historical Buddha in India to the schools of Japanese Zen. While the metaphysical, psychological, ethical, aesthetic, and practical dimensions of Buddhist thought will be surveyed each semester, course content and historical emphasis may vary. The course will invariably end with an introduction to Buddhism in California.

345 Chinese Philosophy (3)

This course provides a survey of Chinese thinkers and schools in the classical period (approximately 500-200 B.C.). The ideas of Confucius, Mozi, Mencius, Zhuangzi, Laozi, Xunzi, and others will be studied within their cultural and historical context as well as with regard to their relevance today. Students will also be introduced to the latest developments in the fast-moving world of classical Chinese studies.

350 Advanced Topics in Moral Philosophy (3)

The aim of this course is to examine recent research and scholarship dealing with a wide range of problems and issues of concern to philosophers who are working in the area of practical philosophy. Some possible topics include: the roles of reason and emotion in moral motivation and judgement; the objectivity of value; the nature of moral identity; social dimensions to moral experience; advanced work in the theory of justice; the scope and limits of morality; the relationship between morality and self-interest; the character of rational action. Philosophers who may be addressed include: Charles Taylor, Juergen Habermas, Alasdair MacIntyre; Simon Blackburn; Alan Gibbard; John Rawls; Michael Smith; John MacDowell. Topics and philosophers will vary depending on interests of faculty.

355 American Philosophy (3)

This course surveys major themes and thinkers that define America's distinct philosophical tradition. Stress will be on the origins of "Pragmatism" as a philosophical movement. Our focus will be on the classical thinkers: Emerson, Thoreau, Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead, and extend to cover the "Neo-Pragmatism" of Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, Cornell West, Stanley Cavell, and others. Course content and emphasis may vary.

360 Philosophy of Art and Literature (3)

An inquiry into the nature of art and literature. This course includes consideration of such topics as: The Possibility of Defining "Art," Artistic Imagination, Creativity and Genius, the Purpose of Art, The Interpretation, and Critical Evaluation of Artworks and Works of Literature, Art and Literature in Everyday Life, and The Intriguing Relationship between Philosophy and Literature.

368 Philosophy and Film (3)

A turn to film and film studies in search of contemporary culture's handling of philosophical themes. The course will develop strategies to study the hidden philosophical significance found within selections from film genres. Such study is indebted to the work of Stanley Cavell and his project to find in film the voices of a repressed American philosophy. Work from throughout critical theory will be considered.

370 Advanced Logic (3)

This course is designed for students who have taken an introductory course in logic. The goal of this course is twofold. First, to consider some more complex logical languages and systems, and second, to consider some of the more properly philosophical issues raised by discussion of those systems. Possible topics of discussion include modality and modal propositional languages; the probability calculus and its application to problems of induction and confirmation; decision theory, and some of the paradoxes of rationality that it seems to give rise to; and game theory, and its relation to economic and moral reasoning.

375 Philosophy of Law (3)

This course represents an advanced introduction to seminal problems and themes in the philosophy of law. Of central concern will be two themes: 1) the differences and relation between law, morality, and politics; and 2) the nature of legal reasoning and modes of justification. The course will examine historical and cultural influences on legal institutions and introduce students to rival philosophical approaches, such as legal positivism, natural law, and legal realism. Specific course emphases and themes may vary depending on faculty interest.

378 Philosophy and Feminism (3)

A critical study of feminist contributions to philosophy. Non-feminist approaches are included to the extent necessary for the students to engage in meaningful criticism of the feminist contributions. The area of philosophy addressed varies from semester to semester.

383 Philosophy of Language (3)

A study of classical and current theories about the nature and functions of language, and about truth and meaning. Analysis of the relevance of philosophy of language to other branches of philosophy, linguistics, psychology, and the social sciences. Analysis of philosophical issues in the language of fiction and poetry.

390 Advanced Topics in Philosophy (1-6)

Topics courses are intended to cover some particular aspect of a philosophical problem, a particular philosopher, or some philosophical issue not normally explored in detail in any of the standard course offerings. Topics include: philosophy in literature, American philosophy, phenomenology, advanced logic, philosophy of science, eastern world views, and 20th century philosophy. May be repeated (with a different focus) for credit.

395 Historical Figures (1-6)

Intensive study of the work of one or more major figures in the history of philosophy. May be repeated (with a different focus) for credit.

399 Student-Instructed Course (1-3)

An introductory or advanced course designed by a senior or graduate student and taught under the supervision of faculty sponsor(s).

Advanced Courses 400 Senior Seminar (3)

A seminar for students in their senior year. Topics vary from semester to semester. May be repeated for credit.

450, 452 Senior Thesis (3, 3)

Writing of a paper deemed acceptable by a faculty director and reader. Superior papers nominated for distinction will be defended before the philosophy faculty. Students wishing to be candidates for graduation "with distinction" are urged to write a thesis. Prerequisite to PHIL 452: PHIL 450. Prerequisites: advanced standing and instructor consent.

462 Research Assistant in Philosophy (1-6)

Intended to give selected students experience in participating in the construction of a professor's research project. Prerequisites: advanced standing and a faculty invitation.

495 Special Studies (1-3)

Advanced individualized instruction and research with one or more members of the philosophy faculty. The course is designed to provide advanced students with an opportunity to do specialized research and study under strict faculty supervision. Prerequisite: consent of the instructor.

499 Internship (1-4)

Supervised training and experience in applied philosophy for advanced students in community organizations. Internship contracts are required. Cr/NC only. Prerequisite: consent of the instructor.

Graduate Courses

The Philosophy Department does not offer a master's program. However, a number of students have received graduate credit for work in philosophy under the auspices of the interdisciplinary M.A. Interested students should consult the chair of the Philosophy Department and the special major advisor.

595 Special Studies in Philosophy (1-6)

Advanced research and writing. Students work under close supervision of faculty members. Subject matter variable. May be repeated for credit.

SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

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THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY