

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Combining Philosophy with another Major or Degree

Many students find it beneficial to combine the Philosophy major with another field of study. As an investigation of fundamental questions, Philosophy can offer insight into the general theories and methods of inquiry that define other disciplines. Moreover, knowledge of the history of philosophical thought can help students understand figures and ideas that are important for other disciplines. Finally, many students find that in-depth study of another discipline provides a more meaningful context in which to understand and apply specific philosophical ideas.

The Philosophy major requirements are deliberately modest—only 30 credits total—so as to encourage such pairing of philosophy with other studies. Please consult with an advisor in both programs if seeking a double major or double degree. See the *GVSU Policy on “Double Dipping” Credits between Majors and Minors* in the *University Graduation Requirements* for information and policies concerning minimum number of unduplicated credits.

EXAMPLES OF DOUBLE MAJORS / DOUBLE DEGREES

Biology

Biology is presently one of the most rapidly developing and important areas of scientific research. It connects with other sciences such as medicine, engineering, genetics and ecology, it has significant social, economic, and political effects, and its practice sometimes raises complex social and ethical problems that require careful reflective analysis. Philosophy majors benefit from an understanding of research and emerging developments in biology, and of the of the tools, theories, and assumptions that combine to form what is known as the scientific method. First-hand experience with scientific practice affords better knowledge of how science works, of its implications for society—in the form of public policy—and of how science affects our personal lives. Various emphases are available within the biology B.A. or B.S., including Pre-Medical study and Natural Resources Management. Minimum credits for Biology major: 38; for Natural Resources Management: 40.

Computer Science

Computer science is the study of programming languages, computational architectures, and information technology. It raises important philosophical issues about, for example, the nature of formal languages and systems, the scope and limits of computational procedures, the nature of human or non-human intelligence, the possibility to model human minds as computers, the relation between formal and natural languages, and the social significance of modern information technology. Computer Science may be fruitfully combined with the study of such areas of philosophy as formal logic, the philosophies of language, mind, and psychology, the philosophy of science and mathematics, and social philosophy. Minimum credits for major: 49.

Chinese Studies

China has a long and rich philosophical tradition, which provides not only a valuable resource on its own, but also a contrast for gaining a deeper understanding of Western philosophy. In a pluralistic world today, building a cross-cultural education basis is particularly important. GVSU is proud of our unique strength in Chinese philosophy. With a major in philosophy, one can take PHI 210 (Eastern Philosophy) and PHI 306 (Eastern Great Philosophers), and take some additional courses for a Chinese major. Minimum credits for major: 30. *A detailed Sample Study Plan is available from the Philosophy Department.*

East Asian Studies (minor only)

East Asia has a long and rich philosophical tradition, which provides not only a valuable resource on its own, but also a contrast for gaining a deeper understanding of Western philosophy. In a pluralistic world today, building a cross-cultural education basis is particularly important. GVSU is proud of our unique strength in Eastern philosophy, particularly Chinese philosophy. With a major in philosophy, one can take PHI 210 (Eastern Philosophy) and PHI 306 (Eastern Great Philosophers), and take some additional courses for an EAS minor. Minimum credits for major: 20. *A detailed Sample Study Plan is available from the Philosophy Department.*

English

Philosophy has always been regarded as a literary pursuit, and from its very beginning philosophers have been particularly concerned with language. Focused studies in British, American or world literature, in literary theory, or linguistics may all complement areas of interest in Philosophy. All English majors must complete the English foundation courses and capstone, and choose an emphasis (Language and Literature, Language Arts, or English Education) within the major. Minimum credits for major: 39.

Film and Video Production

Philosophers have used every available communications medium to communicate their ideas to others. Film and video are clearly among the most powerful and widely available communications media we presently have. Contemporary philosophy not only uses these new media to communicate, but also offers critique and analysis of the media themselves. This is in keeping with Philosophy's familiar role as a source of both cultural commentary and artistic inspiration.

Students who wish to major in Film and Video (CFV) must have an overall GPA of 2.5 and complete three film and video pre-admission courses (with a minimum of 3.0 GPA) in order to apply for admission to more advanced CVF courses. Students are strongly urged to contact an advisor in the Film and Video program as early as possible in their course of study. Minimum credits for major: 54.

Language Study

Philosophy is a global pursuit. Significant philosophical works have been produced in virtually every language, time and place in recorded history. Knowledge of the cultural and historical context in which a work was produced is an important aid to accurate interpretation. Beyond this, fluency in a work's original language can provide a level of access to the author's ideas that is unavailable through any translation. The study of language is also of intrinsic philosophical interest, with significant implications for such areas as metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, logic, aesthetics, and of course the philosophy of language.

Language study is available through both the Department of Classics (Greek, Latin, Hebrew) and the Department of Modern Languages and Literature (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, Polish). Minimum credits for major: 33 to 36, depending on language.

Liberal Studies

The Liberal Studies major allows students to combine the focused study of philosophy with a customized liberal education oriented curriculum that is not otherwise offered at the university. The liberal studies major provides an option in which students can pursue interdisciplinary studies and can reach across divisional lines to draw on the academic resources of the entire Grand Valley campus. Minimum credits for major: 44.

Mathematics

Many philosophers harbor a strikingly strong interest in mathematics; some, including Descartes, Leibniz, Frege, Russell, Peirce, and Husserl, were themselves outstanding mathematicians. Until fairly recently, western philosophers unanimously regarded mathematical knowledge as the *paradigm* of human knowledge, and mathematical practice as the mode of inquiry on which other branches of inquiry were supposed to be modeled. Philosophers have also been interested in the apparently special metaphysical status of mathematical entities. Mathematic majors will find the following areas of philosophy of particular interest: philosophy of mathematics, history and philosophy of science (especially of physics and astronomy), formal logic, epistemology, philosophy of language, and the history of philosophy. Minimum credits for major: 37.

Political Science

Philosophy and Political Science share common roots in their core concern with normative questions of justice, law, power, and the structures of social and political life. Students interested in these philosophical areas will find that the perspective and methods of political science are an excellent complement to philosophy. Minimum credits for major: 36.

Psychology

Philosophies of mind and psychology are among the most vibrant areas in theoretical philosophy. Thousands of scholarly articles each year are devoted to the problem of consciousness (how does a hunk of flesh such as the brain give rise to sensations such as pain?) or the problem of intentionality (how does that same hunk give rise to representational mental states such as beliefs, desires, intentions?). Epistemologists, philosophers of language, and moral philosophers are interested in such areas of psychology as the psychology of perception, the development of language, or the psychology of moral emotions. Psychology majors will find the following areas of philosophy to be of particular interest: philosophy of mind and psychology, epistemology, the philosophy of language, social philosophy, the history of philosophy (especially modern philosophy) philosophy of mathematics, history and philosophy of science (especially of physics and astronomy), formal logic. Minimum credits for major: 36.

Writing

Philosophy and Writing both focus on the careful, precise use of language to understand and communicate ideas. Philosophy tends to emphasize clear definition of terms and the analysis and development of arguments, while Writing pays particular attention to such additional considerations as style, voice, audience, and genre. Some types of Philosophy may be fruitfully regarded as a genre of writing. The focused study of each discipline is an excellent complement to the other. The Writing major allows students to specialize in either Creative Writing or Professional Writing. Minimum credits for major: 42.

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