

# Study Abroad in Philosophy

**“It is good to know something of the customs of various peoples, so as to judge our own more soundly and so as not to think that everything that is contrary to our ways is ridiculous and against reason, as those who have seen nothing have a habit of doing.”**

**Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method***

Imagine arguing about whether or not reality consists fundamentally of ideas while eating heavy German Bratwürste on a misty day near the Rhine; reflecting on Confucius' views about social order and responsibility while gazing at the modern skyline of Shanghai; or contemplating existential anxiety and the inevitability of death in a French café. Imagine being immersed in foreign ways of speaking, thinking and living, learning to make them your own, and being transformed by the experience. Imagine feeling confident and at home, not just in the place where you come from, but in the world. These are the kinds of opportunities for experience, learning and the achievement of personal growth that study abroad has to offer for you.

## **Study abroad can help you...**

- Gain confidence in yourself personally and professionally.
- Understand the field of philosophy from an international perspective
- Expand your cross-cultural communication and problem-solving skills
- Expand your personal and social horizons by developing connections to new people and a different culture.
- Prepare to work in an increasingly diverse and international workplace
- Broaden your academic horizons
- Globalize your world view through direct contact with other cultures
- Experience a foreign culture from the inside.

## **But what about.....**

### **Do I need to speak a foreign language?**

No. While study abroad can be a great way to develop skills in speaking another language through immersion, most study abroad programs offer instruction in English, even in non-English speaking countries.

## **Can I afford to study abroad?**

YES! Early planning for study abroad helps you make cost-effective program decisions, and it also helps you prepare your finances through savings, scholarships, and financial aid. Your financial aid applies to study abroad and, in some cases, your loan eligibility will increase to cover additional expenses. Furthermore, the Padnos International Center offers grants and scholarships specifically for qualified study abroad participants. Visit the Padnos Center to learn more about your options.

## **Will I take longer to graduate?**

With good advance planning, you can take courses that satisfy requirements in your philosophy major or the general education program. Be sure to begin planning at least six months in advance. Prioritize your academic and personal goals. Give yourself time to research and talk to advisers and students who have studied abroad. Study abroad doesn't have to delay completing your degree, but it will enrich your experience.

# What are my next steps?

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## Set goals and plan for results

- Begin at least six months in advance of your study abroad. It is never too early to start planning.
- Set some goals. There is not one program best suited for all philosophy students. There are many good study abroad programs, and the best one for you depends on **what you want**.
- Prioritize your goals. Consider your long-term academic and professional goals (including the possibility of graduate school in the future, either in the U.S. or abroad), as well as your on-campus degree requirements.
- Consider long-term programs.
- Prepare academically. You may need to take language or other prerequisite courses for your chosen program.
- Give yourself time to research and talk to advisers and students who have studied abroad.
- \* Natural considerations to take into account include your pre-existing language competencies, as well as programs in countries closely related to the philosophical ideas or traditions that inspire you the most (e.g. if you have a strong interest in Kant and Hegel, Germany or Austria may be good places to consider, while if you are interested in Confucius or in Buddhism, study in China would be a natural program to pursue).

With proper planning study abroad can help you prepare for your life in today's global context, both personally and professionally.

## Attend a First Step Meeting

Learn about study abroad resources and advising by attending a First Step Meeting at the Padnos International Center. See [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad) or call 616-331-3898 for the latest schedule.

## Investigate Programs

Use the Study Abroad catalog, the Padnos International Center resource center (130 Lake Ontario Hall), website ([www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad)), and peer advisors to find a program that fits your goals.

## Talk to your advisor

The Philosophy Department at GVSU has a distinctly international character, with faculty members who come from around the world. We encourage students to pursue the study abroad option and will work closely with them to be sure that study abroad courses count for appropriate credit here at GVSU. Use a credit transfer form to get approval from the philosophy department for major-specific courses. Students are also able to fulfill general education requirements abroad, including a custom theme. Custom theme information sessions are held every Thursday at 10 am in the Padnos International Center.

## Once you have selected a program

Philosophy students planning on studying abroad will need to communicate closely with their academic advisor throughout their planning process. When you decide on the program that will work best for you, you should begin an online study abroad application at [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad). Be sure to pay close attention to application deadlines.

Be sure to meet with your philosophy advisor **at least three months prior** to departing for your program. The philosophy department must approve any philosophy courses you wish to take to ensure that they will be counted toward your degree requirement.

# Academic Considerations for Philosophy Students

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Philosophy students can study abroad anytime during their four years.

## What classes can I take while studying abroad?

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### General Education Requirements

Students may take selected general education requirements through study abroad. Many students choose to fulfill foundation requirements, including courses within the World Perspectives category.

### Custom Theme Abroad

Another popular option is to fulfill your theme requirement while studying abroad. For information on how to propose a unique study abroad theme, visit the Padnos International Center website at <http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad/>. Theme abroad information sessions are offered every Thursday at 10 am in the Padnos International Center.

### Cognate Degree Requirement

The Philosophy B.A. requires third semester proficiency in a foreign language. Consider working on this requirement while studying abroad.

### Recommended learning outcomes

Studying abroad is an especially effective way for students of philosophy to get in touch with the locations, languages and traditions that have been involved in the history of philosophy and continue to affect its contemporary practice. Students who study abroad in philosophy should think about and develop views on the relationship between philosophy, culture and language. They should consider and develop tentative conclusions about the differences and similarities between the ways of doing philosophy that they are familiar with and those that they confront in their country of study. For example, is there such a thing as a distinctively German, Chinese, Latin American, French, Caribbean or African philosophy? Do

philosophical issues and questions seem to be relatively independent of the particular cultures in which they are discussed, or does the cultural context invariably affect the content and methods of philosophy, and perhaps also the nature of the answers that are considered most plausible? Seriously reflecting on and developing tentative answers to questions such as these should be a primary topic of concern and reflection for a philosophy student studying abroad. In addition, it is strongly recommended that:

- The student make an effort to become fluent in the traditions and intellectual history of the country or region where they are staying and to learn about some of the major philosophers and public intellectuals of the place.
- The student keep a journal of philosophical reflections (this can be included as part of the student's narrative plan) during her or his stay abroad;
- The student consider giving a presentation to the Philosophical Society or other student group upon returning, in which they discuss how their experiences abroad have contributed to and enhanced their thinking about philosophy.

### Major courses

Many study abroad programs offer a wide selection of courses, including philosophy, which can be approved by the philosophy department to contribute to your philosophy major. It is recommended that you plan to fulfill the Capstone requirement at GVSU.

# Suggested Program Options for Philosophy students

The following list of program options are GVSU programs that specifically offer philosophy courses. YOU ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE PROGRAM OPTIONS LISTED BELOW. The Philosophy Department encourages you to consider any study abroad program that allows you to meet your individual academic goals (e.g. Major, GenEds, Custom Theme Abroad, language cognate requirement).

\*The following study abroad program is organized and run by faculty in the Philosophy Department at GVSU.

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## Summer School in Shanghai

Where: Shanghai, China

When: Spring & Summer, faculty led

Led by philosophy faculty and primarily a philosophy program in nature, this program operates during the Spring and Summer terms in Shanghai, China. Students may enroll for the Spring term (6 weeks), the Summer term (6 weeks), or both terms (12 weeks). Each term, you will register for two or three courses in language, philosophy, area studies and/or general education courses. Courses will be taught by GVSU faculty as well as faculty from East China Normal University in Shanghai. A core component of this program is hands-on learning through field trips.

Students will register for 5-9 credits for each term.

### Spring term Course Options:

**CHI 180:** Colloquial Chinese (two credits)

**EAS 201:** East Asia in the Contemporary World (three credits)

**PHI 210/EAS 380:** Eastern Philosophy (three credits)

**SS 351:** Gender and Family in Third World Development (three credits)

**Art 380/EAS 380:** Chinese Art (three credits)

### Summer Session Course Options:

**CHI 180:** Colloquial Chinese (two credits)

**EAS 301:** Masterpieces of East Asian Philosophy (three credits)

**PHI 380:** Comparative Philosophy (three credits)

Course offerings may vary. Please check the Study Abroad Website for most current course options.

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# Africa & Middle East

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## **Ghana: University of Cape Coast (semester or year, *partnership*)**

The University of Cape Coast, established in 1962, is located just west of Cape Coast on a hill overlooking the Gulf of Guinea. You will be within walking distance to the beautiful beaches and cultural treasures that Ghana has to offer. Steeped in tradition and history, two of the most historical sites of Ghana, Elmina Castle and Cape Coast Castle, are located just a short distance from the university.

### **Course Information:**

A number of course options for Philosophy majors and minors exist at University of Cape Coast. To view course equivalencies and program details, visit: [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad) and choose the “study abroad program” option, then “partnerships”

## **Turkey: Middle East Technical University (summer, semester or year, *partnership*)**

The University Founded in 1956, METU adopted English as the medium of instruction. METU is home to more than 20,000 students with 800 to 1200 students attending from 50 countries. Turkey has a unique strategic position at the crossroads of East and West which endows this country with a long history. Turkey is surrounded by seas on three sides and has always been the center of great trade, silk and spice routes. Because of its proximity to not only Europe, but also the Middle East, Turkey enjoys a very vibrant and diverse culture.

### **Course Information:**

A number of course options for Philosophy majors and minors exist at METU. To view course equivalencies and program details, visit: [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad) and choose the “study abroad program” option, then “partnerships”

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# Asia & Oceania

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## India: IISAC Semester in India

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**(semester or year, *non-GVSU affiliate*)**

Pondicherry is located on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, about 3 hours drive south of Chennai. Pondicherry is a popular tourist destination for both Indians and Europeans. With a population of less than 250,000, it is a small city by Indian standards.

Semester in India is a wonderful program for students with a smaller budget and offers a number of different classes. This program is perfect for completing the Theme abroad.

### Course Information:

A number of course options for IR/PLS majors exist at International Christian University. To view course equivalencies and program details, visit: [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad) and choose the "study abroad program" option, then "partnerships".

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# Europe

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## **England: Kingston University (semester or year, *partnership*)**

With an enrollment of over 18,000 students, Kingston University has many years of experience receiving overseas students on study abroad programs. You will take the same classes as Kingston students, offering you an opportunity to integrate into student life.

Founded in 1899, Kingston University is located just 20 minutes from the center of London, one of the world's most diverse, vibrant, and cosmopolitan cities.

### **Course Information:**

A number of course options for Philosophy majors and minors exist at Kingston University.

To view course equivalencies and program details, visit: [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad) and choose the "study abroad program" option, then "partnerships".

## **Greece: Hellenic International Studies in the Arts (semester or year, *non-GVSU affiliate*)**

This Semester/Year Abroad Program encourages its participants to work at their own pace and express their ideas and opinions in an open and unselfconscious way.

Field Trips and Excursions are an important part of HISA's vision of integrating academic and experiential learning. Just some of the marvelous places you will wander through as part of our program: Delos, the sacred island of Apollo; Naxos, home to the god Dionysos; Antiparos, with its famous stalactite cave; and Mykonos, with its windmills and jet-set nightlife.

### **Course Information:**

A number of course options for IR/PLS majors exist at HISA. To view course equivalencies and program details, visit: [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad) and choose the "study abroad program" option, then "partnerships"

## **Italy: Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome (Semester)**

The Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome (ICCS) was established in 1965 by representatives of 10 American colleges and universities; the number of member institutions (including GVSU) has now grown to over 100. It provides undergraduate students with an opportunity in Rome to study ancient history and archaeology, Greek and Latin literature, and ancient art. Many classicists currently in the field are alumni of the ICCS Rome program and look back fondly on their experience at the Centro.

### **Course Information:**

Roman history, topography, art, and architecture; Latin and Ancient Greek

Best suited for students interested in an intensive overview of Roman architecture and topography, who also want to continue with focused language study

## Italy: John Cabot University

**(summer, semester or year, partnership)**

John Cabot University was founded in 1972 as a college of liberal arts and sciences. All courses are taught in English except Italian language and literature. The main campus in Rome is near the Vatican. Students are surrounded by thousands of years of history and art.

### Course Information:

A number of course options for Philosophy majors and minors exist at John Cabot University.

To view course equivalencies and program details, visit: [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad) and choose the “study abroad program” option, then “partnerships”.

## Norway: University of Oslo

**(summer, semester or year, partnership)**

Founded in 1911, the University of Oslo is Norway's largest and oldest institution of higher education.

Today the University has approximately 30,000 students. On campus you will find an extensive range of cultural and social activities.

Oslo is situated in the southeast part of the country at the base of the Oslo Fjord, which opens into the North Sea. An elegant and sophisticated city with an international flavor, Oslo not only offers every urban amenity; but is an outdoor lover's paradise. Just outside the city you'll have easy access to skiing, snowboarding, mountain or rock climbing, sailing, boating, camping, and hiking. The rail system in Norway is world-class, linking Oslo to small towns, villages, national parks, and ski slopes quickly and inexpensively.

### Course Information:

A number of course options for Philosophy majors/minors exist at University of Oslo.

To view course equivalencies and program details, visit: [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad) and choose the “study abroad program” option, then “partnerships”.

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# Latin America & the Caribbean

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## Jamaica

**(winter semester only, partnership)**

The University of the West Indies is the premier institution of higher learning in the West Indies. With over 13,000 students, UWI offers a vibrant student community rich in activities and a supportive academic environment. Students will experience first-hand this tropical, island culture which is rich in history, arts, music and sports.

Mona, Jamaica is set up in the hills about 20 minutes from Kingston. Students will have easy access to on-campus canteens, local stores, and entertainment. Additionally, students interested in community service will have opportunities to participate in various activities organized by UWI students

### Course Information:

A number of course options for Philosophy majors and minors exist at University of West Indies.

To view course equivalencies and program details, visit: [www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad](http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad) and choose the “study abroad program” option, then “partnerships”

**Please note: This is just a partial list of places and programs to consider. Talk with your advisor and visit the Padnos International Center to more fully explore the options available to you.**

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