

4.6.15 Philosophy

Academic Staff

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Program Description

The study of Philosophy enables students to develop their critical understandings and appreciations of human knowledge, reasoning, and values as articulated in various philosophical endeavors. This program is designed to equip students with a broad, classical understanding of human life and thought, an awareness of methods, topics, and trends in Philosophy, and an advanced ability to think analytically, critically, and creatively.

Program Objectives

In addition to meeting the mission and purposes of Providence College, the study of Philosophy will enable each graduate to:

1. Characterize the various methods and perspectives of Philosophy in contrast to other humanities and the social sciences.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of differing approaches to the integration of Christian perspectives and Philosophy, and skill in its practice.
3. Summarize and evaluate important human ideas and issues from an informed Christian worldview.
4. Interpret his or her human experience and thereby enhance self-understanding, for the purpose of attaining more enlightened and satisfying human experience.
5. Display an appreciation of and commitment to the common good and well-being of human life.
6. Be prepared for further studies in Philosophy.

Program Information

Students in philosophy may select a Philosophy Minor or Concentration. The prerequisite for entry into the Philosophy Minor or Concentration is a grade of C or better in any Providence philosophy course.

Philosophy Minor or Concentration (18 credit hours)

213.11 – PHIL: Introduction to Philosophy

213.13 – PHIL: Critical Thinking

12 credit hours of Philosophy electives (3 hours at the upper level)

Students with a Philosophy Concentration may pair it with a concentration in another discipline in the humanities or social sciences to comprise one of the following majors:

Humanities Major (3 year)

Humanities Advanced Major (4 year)

Humanities Honours Major (4 year)

Interdisciplinary Arts Major (3 year)

Interdisciplinary Arts Advanced Major (4 year)

Interdisciplinary Arts Honours Major (4 year)

See 4.6.9 Humanities or 4.6.12 Interdisciplinary Arts for the full details of these majors.

Philosophy Course Descriptions

Foundations in Humanities

200.40 – HUM/SSC: Honours Thesis

A guided capstone research and writing project for seniors in Honours majors.

Philosophy

213.11 – PHIL: Introduction to Philosophy

An introductory investigation of the main areas of philosophy: logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Our investigation will be sensitive to the historical roots from which philosophical thought has developed, but will be concerned primarily with understanding philosophy's perennial questions and, when possible, providing some initial reasonable answers.

213.13 – PHIL: Critical Thinking

A course in practical logic, designed to help students think clearly and critically by learning to identify, analyze, evaluate, and construct arguments. The course includes the study of basic types of reasoning, the structure of argument, criteria of argument assessment, formal and informal fallacies, plus problems of clarity and meaning.

213.21 – PHIL: History of Philosophy

A brief introduction to the chief concerns and methods of the most influential western philosophers from ancient Greek times to the present.

213.22 – PHIL: Ethics

A study of the major theories of ethics and a discussion of various contemporary moral issues. Major ethical theories include moral relativism, virtue ethics, contractarianism, utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, evolutionary ethics, natural law theory, divine command theory, the golden rule, intuitionism. Contemporary moral issues include abortion, genetic technology and cloning, stem cell research, suicide, euthanasia/physician-assisted suicide, capital punishment, war, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, pornography, discrimination and affirmative action.

213.23 – PHIL: Philosophy of Religion

A critical examination of religious beliefs and the grounds for holding them. Topics will include religious pluralism, competing views on the relation between faith and reason, the nature of God, arguments for the existence of God, miracles and reasonable belief, the logic of God incarnate, personal religious experience, the problem of evil and suffering, Pascal's wager, and the nature and limits of apologetics. (This course will focus primarily on Christian theism, though much is directly relevant to other religious views. For further philosophical investigation of other religious views, students are encouraged to take 213.24 – PHIL: Worldview Studies as a complement to this course.)

213.24 – PHIL: Worldview Studies

An introductory systematic survey and assessment of major secular and religious philosophies/worldviews. Students will be equipped with the conceptual tools of worldview analysis and evaluation and will apply them to biblical Christian theism, non-Christian theism, deism, naturalism, eastern pantheistic monism, the New Age, and postmodernism. (Note: for greater detail concerning the history, leaders, teachings, traditions, and practices of the world's religions, students are advised to take courses in Religious Studies)

213.25 – PHIL: Philosophy of Science

A philosophical examination of the scientific enterprise. Topics include the nature of science, scientific methodologies, models of explanation, the assumptions of science, the relation between theory and observation, the realist/instrumentalist status of scientific theories, competing views of the relation between science and theology, plus a philosophical investigation of the scientific status of intelligent design theory. (A previous course in Philosophy is recommended but not required. This course satisfies a Science requirement)

213.32 – PHIL: Ethics in the Marketplace

Ethical issues that affect business decisions and operations will be studied. Emphasis will be placed on contemporary issues that impact management from the viewpoint of society. (Prerequisite: one 213.1x or 213.2x philosophy course)

213.33 – PHIL: Special Studies in Ethics

An investigation of a topic in ethics of particular interest to a guest lecturer or faculty member. Possible topics include but are not exhausted by the following: abortion, genetic technology and cloning, stem cell research, same-sex marriage, physician-assisted suicide, war. (Prerequisite: one 213.1x or 213.2x philosophy course)

213.34 – PHIL: Special Studies in Philosophy of Religion

An investigation of a topic in philosophy of religion of particular interest to a guest lecturer or faculty member. Possible topics include but are not exhausted by the following: postmodernity and Christianity, contemporary challenges to Christianity, David Hume on miracles, the kalam cosmological argument, evil and suffering as an objection to God's existence. (Prerequisite: one 213.1x or 213.2x philosophy course)

213.35 – PHIL: Special Studies in Philosophy of Science

An investigation of a topic in Philosophy of Science of particular interest to a guest lecturer or faculty member. Possible topics include but are not exhausted by the following: a philosophical investigation of the scientific status of intelligent design, relativistic challenges to objectivity of observation. (Prerequisite: one 213.1x or 213.2x philosophy course)

213.36 – PHIL: Special Studies in Philosophy

An investigation of a topic in philosophy of particular interest to a guest lecturer or faculty member. (Prerequisite: one 213.1x or 213.2x philosophy course)

213.42 – PHIL: Contemporary Religious Philosophers

A survey of contemporary Christian religious philosophy with readings from recent and current Protestant and Catholic writers. Representatives from Fundamentalism, Liberalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, Radical Theology, Liberation Theology, and Process Theology will be considered. (Prerequisite: one 213.1x or 213.2x philosophy course)

Courses Cross-Credited for Philosophy Minors:**111.12 – BTHO: Philosophical Foundations for Theology**

(See Theological Studies, Theology, for course description)