Philosophy is the study of the most fundamental issues concerning reality, knowledge, and value. Through the study of philosophy, students build skills of critical reflection, careful reading and writing, and creative thinking—skills that will be invaluable throughout their lives as workers and citizens in a democratic society.

Education

The Department of Philosophy provides students with an appreciation of the most insightful historical and contemporary discussions of philosophical issues and helps them develop the mental tools to evaluate these as well as their own views. We teach our students to think critically and communicate effectively, while learning skills needed for life-long careers.

The department offers Bachelor of Arts and Doctoral degrees in Philosophy, a Bachelor of Arts degree through the History and Philosophy of Science Program, as well as a minor in Philosophy. Special areas of strength — areas in which there are several philosophy faculty members doing active research — include philosophy of science, applied ethics, history of philosophy, and feminist philosophy.

The breadth of the field of philosophy is reflected in the department's course offerings. In addition to a full range of courses in the standard areas of philosophy and the history of philosophy, the department also offers courses relating to philosophical aspects of law, religion, formal and empirical sciences (mathematics, logic and the physical, biological and social sciences), public policy, information technology, the environment, bioethics, and global justice and human rights.

With its breadth and concern with fundamental intellectual issues, philosophy is an excellent second major for students in the other units of the College of Arts and Sciences. Of the department's 147 majors in the fall of 2016, 68 of them are double or triple majors.

The department is home to the Program on Values in Society, dedicated to research, teaching, and dialogue on ethical issues that arise across the disciplines. The program is committed to facilitating the multidisciplinary collaboration that is essential to finding practical and insightful responses to today's myriad moral problems. The members of the core faculty are currently working on a variety of issues, ranging from climate change to disability rights to global justice. The program's undergraduate minor and graduate certificate aim to provide students with the background and training that are necessary for thoughtful, rigorous, and sensitive engagement with ethical issues.

STUDENTS (Autumn 2016)
- 147 Undergraduate majors
- 63 Undergraduate minors
- 25 Graduate students

DEGREES AWARDED (July 2015 - June 2016)
- 59 Bachelor of Arts degrees
- 5 Master of Arts degrees
- 3 PhD degrees

MAJOR STUDENT AWARDS (Since 2007)
- 3 Elizabeth Kerr Macfarlane Endowed Scholarships
- 2 Arts & Sciences Dean's Medals
- 2 Bonderman Travel Fellowships
- 1 Gates-Cambridge Scholar
- 2 Alvord Fellowships
- 2 Huckaby Teaching Awards
- 3 Graduate Student Dissertation Awards
- 3 Joff Hanauer Graduate Student Fellows
- 2 Herman S. & Dorothy B. Lederman Humanities Scholarships
- 3 Presidential Dissertation Completion Fellowships
- 1 Soden-Trueblood Endowed Graduate Publishing Fellowship
- 1 Excellence in Teaching Award
- 2 UW President's Medals
- 2 Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships
- 1 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Dissertation Fellowship
Faculty

Faculty awards and honors include:

4 Distinguished Teaching Awards
1 Outstanding Teaching Award, Key International Honor Society
1 President of the American Philosophical Association Pacific Division
1 Berger Prize for Best Essay in Philosophy of Law, APA
2 Joff Hanauer Honors Professorships in Western Civilization
1 Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
1 First Prize for Most Creative Idea, National Institute of Health Peer Review Challenge
1 National Science Foundation Grant
1 Editor-in-Chief of Philosophy of Science
1 President of the Philosophy of Science Association
1 Samuel and Althea Stroum Chair in Jewish Studies
1 paper rated among the 10 best philosophy papers published in 2014, judged by The Philosopher’s Annual

Scholarship

Department of Philosophy faculty members teach and conduct research in most of the traditional areas of philosophy. In addition, many members hold adjunct or joint appointments in other units on campus including the Evans School of Public Affairs, the Program on the Environment, the Medical School, the Information School, the Stroum Jewish Studies Program, the Departments of Anthropology, History, Physics, and Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies and the Dance Program.

The wide variety of interests found among the faculty members is reflected in their recently published or upcoming books, which include Geoengineering, Political Legitimacy and Justice; Justice, Migration, and Mercy; Social Equality: On What it Means to be Equals; Justice & Foreign Policy; Human Rights and Human Well-Being; A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Challenge of Climate Change; Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Aristotle and the Politics; Spinoza’s Theological–Political Treaties: A Critical Guide; and Achieving Justice in Genomic Translation: Rethinking the Pathway to Benefit.

Outreach

The UW Center for Philosophy for Children offers a class each quarter introducing UW students to methods of doing philosophy with K-12 students. UW students facilitate philosophy classes in Seattle Public Schools that explore a range of philosophical questions.

Department faculty frequently provide commentary on public radio and local, national, and international news sources on topics varying from current events to social norms.

The department offers several distance learning courses as part of the Online Integrated Social Sciences Degree Program, including Contemporary Moral Problems, Ethics and the Environment, and Topics in the Philosophy of Science.

Each year the department sponsors conferences, workshops, and a colloquium series. Topics include ethics and climate change, medical ethics, global justice, philosophy of physics, immigration, and human rights.

Through a new project — “Philosophy Branches Out” — the department is exploring ways to develop collaborative relationships between philosophy doctoral students and members of the Seattle community to broaden students’ career training while applying their philosophical expertise to real-life problems.

The Department of Philosophy Advisory Board provides an opportunity for interested people outside of academia to contribute to the department by assisting with community and public relations, and supporting the department’s fund development efforts.

In addition to sending out quarterly newsletters, the Department maintains an active presence on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Connect with us today!

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