

Philosophy

- Philosophy
- Humanities



Our Program

The philosophy major at Messiah College introduces you to a careful, systematic investigation of fundamental issues of reality and human experience. By addressing such issues as whether or not we have free will, God's relation to the world and to evil, and the nature and origin of morality, the philosophy major will equip you with the sort of background and intellectual skills that will enrich your life and enable you to rationally develop a distinctively Christian view of the world. The major in philosophy offers intensive training in analytical and critical thinking skills, a broad historical background in Western thought, and an exposure to non-Western philosophy.

The philosophy minor is designed for students who wish to supplement their primary education in another field with the study of philosophy. It allows great flexibility to explore those areas of philosophy that are of the most interest and benefit to the individual student.



Why Philosophy?

We at Messiah work very hard to make our philosophy program both academically rigorous and unapologetically Christian.

Our primary goal is to train students toward intellectual maturity in the context of the Christian faith. We do this by engaging students in a careful, systematic investigation of fundamental issues of reality and human experience.

We believe that by cutting their intellectual teeth on such issues as whether or not we have free will, God's relation to the world and to evil, and the nature and origin of morality, students gain the sort of valuable intellectual skills necessary for effectiveness in life, their Christian walk, and any career. As a recent *New York Times* article pointed out, by engaging in philosophical analysis, students are "well placed to think about problems of evidence,

decision making, responsibility and ethics that life throws up."

Student evaluation of our courses consistently shows that we rank in the top 2% of classes nationwide on instilling "critical thinking and reasoning skills." Further, philosophy is well known as the best preparation for law school, where critical thinking is at a premium. Indeed, philosophy majors as a group score higher on the Graduate Record Examination than students in any other major. They score on average five percent above the mean on the LSAT (law), the GMAT (graduate management), the GRE verbal, and the GRE quantitative. (For more information, see our web site.)

Philosophy is not for everyone, but if you are the sort of person who would like to hone critical thinking skills; to think more deeply about the world, life, and Christian beliefs; and to thought-

fully engage our culture, you should seriously consider either a philosophy major, double major, or minor.

The Major and Minor

The Department of Philosophy offers two majors and one minor.

They are structured to give students maximum flexibility in combining philosophy with disciplines, something we especially encourage. In the past, we have had students successfully complete double majors in philosophy and such other disciplines as English, history, computer science, Bible, religion, and Christian ministries. Many other students have completed minors in philosophy with majors in some other discipline.

The major in philosophy offers intensive training in analytical and critical thinking skills, a broad historical background in Western thought, and an exposure to non-Western philosophy. Because of the intellectual breadth and critical thinking skills philosophy provides, it serves as an excellent basis for more advanced studies in graduate, law, or divinity school, and enhances the effectiveness of graduates in other professions. Moreover, the philosophy major serves the church and the world by equipping Christians, whether laypersons or seminary-trained leaders, with the ability to address fundamental issues of concern to every person.

The cross-disciplinary humanities major, offered in cooperation with the departments of history, English, and art, allows students great flexibility in structuring their own programs in consultation with an advisor.

The philosophy minor is designed for students who wish to supplement their primary education in another field with the study of philosophy. It also allows great flexibility to explore those areas of philosophy that are of the most interest and benefit to the individual student.

A Christian college of the liberal and applied arts and sciences.



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SCHOOL OF THE HUMANITIES



Philosophy

Our Faculty

Our faculty are all caring, committed Christians who would like to see our students graduate with a well-reasoned, coherent Christian worldview that can be a positive force in the marketplace of ideas.

The Messiah philosophy department believes in exposing students in a sophisticated way to the best thinking about the issues of great cultural significance. To meet this challenge, we have a highly qualified and well-rounded philosophy faculty. Professor Robin Collins, Ph.D., specializes in philosophy of science, philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and philosophical theology. He is well versed in issues relating to science and religion, with graduate-level training in theoretical physics. He is currently working on a book entitled *The Well-designed Universe: God, Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature*, which argues that the basic structure of the universe strongly points to the existence of a Designer. Professor Caleb Miller, Ph.D., specializes in ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. He is well versed on moral theory and applied ethics, the relationship of human belief and knowledge to reality, and the relationship of faith and reason. Professor Henry Venema, Ph.D., specializes in twentieth-century French and German philosophy, especially as it relates to selfhood and identity, theories of interpretation, and philosophical theology. He has written a book entitled *Identifying Selfhood: Imagination, Narrative & Hermeneutics in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur*. The teaching, research, and writing of all the department's faculty are especially focused on the relationship of important philosophic issues to the concerns of Christian faith.



such skills as the ability to clarify, analyze, and solve difficult and vaguely defined problems; to organize ideas and issues, to respectfully consider alternative points of view; to assess pros and cons of an issue; to boil down complex data; to find and articulate hidden assumptions; and to communicate effectively, both verbally and through writing.

Employers often say that these are just the skills they want in college graduates, especially in our increasingly information-intensive job market. As Roger Herman, CEO of the Herman Group, a futuristic business "think tank," notes, "with the incredible challenges that will face workers in our fast changing environment, strength in communicating and critical thinking will be invaluable." He thus advises students to "avoid too much specialization in undergraduate years; specialization was good preparation for bygone years" (*The Futurist*, p. 17, July 2000).

The ability of philosophy to provide this sort of training is confirmed by alumni surveys. For example, a survey was given at Taylor University to alumni who had majored in philosophy. All of those who were surveyed agreed that philosophy had given them helpful skills for their present careers. It was also evident from the survey that a philosophy major was especially advantageous when combined with another major. The size and flexibility of the philosophy major at Messiah College make it very well suited for such combination.

The training that philosophy provides could truly be said to be the wave of the future: one can learn the critical thinking skills necessary for a career, but at the same time learn the great ideas that have shaped civilization, broaden one's horizons, and grow in one's Christian faith.

After Graduation

Philosophic training can serve as a valuable basis for more advanced studies in graduate, law, or divinity school, and enhance the effectiveness of graduates in other professions.

Regardless of what career you choose, the ability to think carefully about problems and issues related to the job is a valuable asset. Moreover, the philosophy

major equips Christians, whether laypersons or seminary-trained leaders, with the ability to address fundamental issues of concern to every person.

About Messiah

A Messiah College education will challenge your intellect, mold your character, and press you to examine your faith. A private, four-year Christian college, Messiah College offers you a world of opportunities.

You'll share your college experience with other inquisitive students, learning together from professors who are deeply involved in teaching and the emerging scholarship of their fields.

Your college endeavors may include everything from debating in the classroom to researching with the latest lab equipment, from pushing yourself on the athletic field to lifting your voice with a music ensemble, from caving during an Outdoors Club trip to soaring in the skies with our Flying Club, from sharing in your residence hall to serving in nearby towns, cities, and around the world.

And when you graduate, you'll join our nearly 15,000 alumni who are changing the world in every field imaginable. Our alumni are shaping policy in Washington, D.C., reporting on world events, practicing accounting with top firms, and completing graduate degrees at places like Oxford, Yale, Duke, and Harvard. They're working in inner cities and serving with ministries both in the United States and abroad.

Founded in 1909, Messiah College enrolls 2,800 full-time students who are pursuing degrees in more than 50 majors and pre-professional programs. Our main campus is located in Grantham, Pennsylvania, just ten miles southwest of Harrisburg, the state capital. We're also just a few hours from Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

Messiah College is a place for wonder, growth, achievement, and opportunity. But don't just take our word for it. Come see for yourself!

Messiah College does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, age, disability, or national or ethnic origin.



One College Avenue
Grantham, PA 17027
717.766.2511
www.messiah.edu

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I'd like to know more about Messiah College. Please send me:

A viewbook An application Financial aid information Campus visit information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Phone (____) _____

I will graduate from _____

high school/college in 20_____

My average high school grades are: A A- B+ B B- C+ C (circle one)

My academic interest(s) is/are _____

My extracurricular interest(s) is/are _____

Comments _____

The Admissions & Financial Aid

Office is open weekdays,
8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

To schedule a visit
at Messiah College,
call 800.233.4220,
or e-mail us at
admiss@messiah.edu

Visit our web site at
www.messiah.edu

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