



PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT
HANDBOOK

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ABOUT PHILOSOPHY



We are a department of caring and accomplished philosophers who are serious about our Christian faith, about reason, and about the deep connections between the two. Our students explore life's most fundamental questions as they learn to think clearly, analytically, and creatively about controversial ideas, develop and articulate their own distinctly Christian worldview, and learn to write and speak clearly and persuasively.

“What Do You Teach?”

The department offers a wide variety of courses in contemporary analytic philosophy, contemporary continental philosophy, logic, ethics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, and the history of philosophy. Students also have the opportunity to work directly with faculty on our ongoing research projects, study abroad for a semester at Oxford University, and present their best papers at national and regional philosophy conferences.

“What Skills Will I Develop?”

Philosophy helps students work out the foundations of their faith and rationally defend it. It also excels at teaching logical reasoning and reading comprehension skills, both of which are essential to success in nearly any desirable career. It equally excels at teaching students how to compose and clearly articulate the best arguments for their own positions, be those in matters of philosophy or matters of business. Furthermore, the ability to think logically and carefully about difficult questions is a great benefit to students' personal and spiritual development. It expands their view of the world, teaches them to make sound, well-reasoned decisions and helps them develop a degree of maturity, moral awareness, and rational self-governance that is sorely needed in America today.

“What Can I Do with It?”

Contrary to a popular myth, philosophy graduates enjoy the best career advancement results in the liberal arts. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, the median mid-career salary for a philosophy major is \$81,200, which is far above the norm¹. On average, philosophy majors score higher than any others except mathematics and physics on the Law School Admissions Test and the Graduate Management Admissions Test, and they consistently outscore all other majors on the verbal and analytical sections of the Graduate Record Examination. This is no accident. Our majors acquire skills in reading comprehension and in clear, rigorous, analytical reasoning that serve them extraordinarily well both in their careers and in life. Students interested in careers in law, business, economics, computer science, engineering, mathematics, medical school, or Christian ministry are all well-suited for studies in philosophy.

¹ References: http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-Degrees_that_Pay_you_Back-sort.html;
<http://dornsife.usc.edu/phil/undergraduate/>

“Do I Want This?”

That, we submit, is the better question to ask. To our knowledge, no one ever begins a serious study in philosophy on account of greed or vanity. In nearly all cases, students instead pursue it on account of their love of truth and their desire for real knowledge thereof. That is what philosophy is all about; we seek answers to fundamental questions about reality, humanity, God, the nature of right and wrong, and indeed truth itself. Students passionate about these questions are ideal candidates for studying philosophy. By having this passion they are already philosophers of sorts; the remaining question is, “Will they major in it?”

Contact Us

Questions? Feel free to contact us. email: rcollins@messiah.edu, office: 717-796-1800-ext. 3100, home: 717-691-7965.

FACULTY

We are all caring, committed Christians who want students graduate with well-honed critical thinking and writing abilities, and a well-reasoned, coherent Christian worldview that can be a positive force in the marketplace of ideas. 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.

Our teaching, research, and writing are especially focused on the relationship of important philosophic issues to the concerns of Christian faith. We also believe in exposing students to the best thinking in other areas of great cultural significance.

Our faculty members are:

Dr. Robin Collins

Dr. Timothy Schoettle

Profiles



Robin Collins

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy

Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Physics, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophical Theology, and Science and Religion

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Bio Sketch

Professor Robin Collins, Ph.D., is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy. He 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 has written almost forty substantial articles and book chapters in these areas with some of the leading academic presses, such as Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Blackwell, and Routledge. He has also spoken on issues relating to God and the cosmos at many colleges and universities (including Oxford University, Cambridge University, Yale University, and Stanford University) and has appeared in the popular Christian and secular media – for example, in *Christianity Today*, Lee Strobel’s *Case for the Creator*, and Robert Kuhn’s PBS series *Closer to the Truth*. Professor Collins is widely regarded as the foremost expert on the fine-tuning argument, an argument for the existence of God based on the extraordinarily precise structure that the universe must have for life to exist. He is currently finishing two books on this topic: one that provides a detailed analysis of the evidence for fine-tuning and one that carefully makes the philosophical case from fine-tuning to divine creation. Besides his work on fine-tuning, he has written on the philosophy of quantum mechanics, the relation between the mind and the body, the nature of prayer, atonement, and a variety of other topics in philosophy of science and philosophy of religion.

Education

Ph.D., Philosophy – University of Notre Dame, 1993

B.S. Physics, B.A. Mathematics, Washington State University, 1984

Courses Taught

- Problems in Philosophy
- Asian Philosophy
- Philosophy of Religion
- Philosophy of Science

- Issues in Science and Religion (Team taught with Professor Ted Davis and Associate Professor David Foster)
- Christian Apologetics
- Metaphysics

Selected Articles and Book Chapters

- “Against the Epistemic Value of Prediction over Accommodation.” *Noûs*, Vol. 28, No. 2, June 1994, pp. 210–24.
- “An Epistemological Critique of Bohmian Mechanics.” In Bohmian Mechanics and Quantum Theory: An Appraisal, James T. Cushing, Arthur Fine, and Sheldon Goldstein, eds., Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996, pp. 265–76.
- “Evidence for Fine-Tuning.” In God and Design: The Teleological Argument and Modern Science, Neil A. Manson, ed., New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 178–99. [This article has been translated into Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and Turkish.]
- “Evolution and Original Sin.” In Perspectives on an Evolving Creation, Keith B. Miller, ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, pp. 469–501.
- “Contributions from the Philosophy of Science.” In The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science, Philip Clayton and Zachary Simpson, eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 328–44.
- “The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective.” In Universe or Multiverse?, Bernard Carr, ed., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 459–80.
- “The Case for Cosmic Design,” and “Clarifying the Case for Cosmic Design: A Response to Paul Draper,” in God or Blind Nature?: Philosophers Debate the Evidence, edited by Paul Draper, infidels.org, 2008. (This is the first online book debating the merits of theism versus atheism).
- “Modern Physics and the Energy-Conservation Objection to Mind-Body Dualism.” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 1, January 2008, pp. 31–42.
- “The Teleological Argument: An Exploration of the Fine-Tuning of the Universe.” In The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology, William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, eds., Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, pp. 202–81.
- “God and the Laws of Nature,” in *Philo: A Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Fall–Winter 2009, pp. 142–171.
- “Divine Action and Evolution.” In The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology, Thomas P. Flint and Michael Rea, eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 241–61.
- “A Scientific Case for the Soul.” In The Soul Hypothesis: Investigations into the Existence of the Soul, Mark C. Baker and Stewart Goetz, eds., New York: Continuum International, 2011, pp. 222–46. [Defends the existence of a soul distinct from the body.]
- “Theism and Naturalism.” In The Routledge Companion to Theism, Charles Taliaferro, Victoria Harrison, and Stewart Goetz, eds., New York: Routledge, 2012.
- “Non-Violent Atonement,” *Brethren in Christ History and Life Journal*, April 2012

- “Modern Cosmology and Anthropic Fine-tuning: Three Approaches.” In Georges Lemaître: Life, Science and Legacy. (Astrophysics and Space Science Library.) Rodney Holder and Simon Mitton, eds., New York, New York, Springer, 2013.
- “The Fine-Tuning Evidence is Convincing.” In Oxford Dialogues in Christian Theism, Chad Meister, J. P. Moreland, and Khaldoun Sweis, eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- “The Connection Building Theodicy.” In The Blackwell Companion to the Problem of Evil, Dan Howard-Snyder and Justin McBrayer, eds., Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming.

Selected Presentations

- “Universe or Multiverse? A Theistic Perspective.” Invited Plenary Speaker, *Symposium on the Multi-Universe Hypothesis*, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, March 27–30, 2003. Sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation.
- “The Case for Theism.” (A debate with philosopher Doug Jesseph (University of Florida), sponsored by the Philosophy Club at Florida Gulf Coast University at Fort Meyers, FL, March 25, 2009.)
- “The Fine-Tuning Argument for Theism,” Invited talk for the *Second Annual Distinguished Lecture in Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, April 6, 2010.
- “The Atonement: A New and Orthodox Theory,” Invited talk for the *Second Annual Distinguished Lecture in Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, April 7, 2010.
- “Cosmic Fine-Tuning: Three Approaches and Their Implications.” Invited Plenary Speaker (all expenses paid plus honorarium), *Georges Lemaître Anniversary Conference*, Faraday Institute, Cambridge University, April 7–10, 2011.
- Invited Workshop Leader for “The Fine-Tuning Argument: A Series of Three All Day Workshops.” June 15–18, 2011, *St. Thomas Summer Seminar in Philosophy of Religion and Philosophical Theology*, University of Saint Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, Michael Rota and Dean Zimmerman, seminar directors.
- Seminar Co-leader. “Science and Religion Pedagogy.” June 27, 2011 – July 27, 2011. Calvin College Summer Seminar for Chinese Professors, co-taught with Professor Ted Davis.
- “Non-violent Atonement,” invited speaker, Brethren in Christ Study Conference, Grantham, PA, November 12, 2011.
- “Saving Our Souls from Materialism,” invited speaker, Church of the Servant, Grand Rapids, MI, March 3rd, 2013. (Point/counterpoint in which I defended belief in an immaterial soul for and another speaker defended Christian materialism.).

Selected Interviews

Secular Media

- *Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine*, January 11, 2004. “The Deity and the Data: How Science Is Putting God under Its Lens” by William Hageman, January 11, 2004.
- *PBS Series: Closer to Truth: Science, Meaning and the Future*, September 22, 2006. This program “brings together leading scientists, scholars and thinkers to explore fundamental issues

of life, sentience, and universe.” (About 45 minutes of the interview were broadcast on selected PBS stations throughout the US; the interview is now on the web at <http://www.closetotruth.com/participant/Robin-Collins/23>.)

- Stanford University’s *Philosophy Talk Radio*, March 17th, 2013. Hour-long live interview on the fine-tuning design argument for. (This was played on selected NPR stations throughout the US).

Christian Media

- Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards, *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed for Discovery*, (Independent Film), Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing Inc., 2004. On-screen interview in documentary film.
- Interviews on September 15–16, 2010 with an editor from *Christianity Today* for an article on Stephen Hawking’s new book, *The Grand Design*.

Major Recent Awards and Distinctions

- Templeton Foundation Grant to finish the *Well-Tempered Universe: God, Fine-Tuning, and the Laws of Nature*. (\$91,000, reduces teaching load to half time over the period Spring 2008 through May, 2010.)
- “Discoverability and Providence” grant from the Templeton Foundation. Two-year (2013 – 2015), \$54,000 grant to work on the evidence that the universe is fine-tuned for discovery and its implications for the relationship between chance and providence.
- “Neuroscience and The Soul” fellowship, Center for Christian Thought, Biola University, spring 2013. (\$45,000 fellowship + expenses).

Professional History

August, 2012 – present: Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA

2005 – 2011: Professor of Philosophy, Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA

1999 – 2004: Associate Professor of Philosophy, Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA

1994 – 1999: Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA



Timothy Schoettle

Professor

Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Language

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Education

Ph.D., Philosophy: University of California, Irvine, spring, 2003
U.C.I. Summer dissertation fellowship, summer 2001
Brython Davis fellowship award, 2001-2002

M.A., Philosophy: University of Michigan, fall, 1997
Regent's Scholarship, 1993-1994

Harvard (1991-1992) and Tufts (1992-1993)
post-undergraduate, non-degree, graded work

B.A. English: Yale, spring, 1990
Magna cum laude, distinction in the English major

Courses Taught

- Aesthetics
- Existentialism
- Early Modern Philosophy
- Problems of Philosophy
- Feminism
- Critical Thinking
- Metaphysics and Epistemology
- Ethics

Selected Publications/Presentations

- "How Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Inverted Spectrum" *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. 90(1) 2009
- "The Form Content Distinction in Husserl and Kant" *Chronos*. Vol. X 2008-2009

- “Whatever happened to John McTaggart?” *Chronos*. Vol. IX 2007-2008
- “The Shocking Non Sequitur” *International Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. 48(4) 2008
- Review of Robert Brandom’s Tales of the Mighty Dead. *De Philosophia*. (2004) 18(1), 118-121.
- “Showing and Saying” and Co-Author of “Causal Analysis” *Humanity Core Course Guide* 2001-2002 (Instruction material used in the instruction of over 1000 students)
- “Can Consciousness be Explained?”, co-author. Online at: www.macrovu.com/CCTGeneralInfo.html
- Invited talk on the inverted spectrum
NYU Philosophy Department, fall 2012
- “Whatever Happened to John McTaggart?”, peer reviewed application
American Philosophical Association, Central Division, spring 2008
Philosophy of Time Society
- “The Shocking Non Sequitur”, peer reviewed application
Society of Christian Philosophers, Eastern Division, spring 2006
- “A Problem for Perry (and Lycan)”, peer reviewed application
American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, spring, 2002

Current Interests/Projects

- Paradox
- Philosophy of Mind
- Perception
- Philosophy of Language
- Phenomenology
- Critical Theory

Professional History

Fall 2009 – present: Associate Professor, Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA
 2004 – Spring 2009: Assistant Professor, Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA
 2003 – 2004: Adjunct Professor, Mount Saint Mary’s College, Los Angeles, CA
 1999 – 2003: Teaching Assistant, U.C. Irvine, Irvine, CA
 1995 – 1997: Teaching Assistant, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Academic Faith Testimonies

Robin Collins

I became a Christian shortly before going to college at Washington State University. Partly because I was not raised in a Christian home, I had many intellectual questions about the Christian faith. These were partly stirred by my best friend from high school attempting to dissuade me from any faith. In college, I majored in mathematics and physics (completing two degrees in this subject), eventually picking up a third major in philosophy – which I completed on a scholarship in my fifth year. I went into philosophy because I thought it would give me the tools to help sort through my faith, which it did.

Before pursuing a doctorate in philosophy, I went to graduate school in theoretical physics for two years at the University of Texas at Austin (1984-1986). During that time, I felt a strong and persistent sense of calling to do philosophy as a vocation, something that has stayed with me over the years. Because of this, I wrote the newly formed Society of Christian Philosophers concerning whether there were any Christian philosophers at universities on the West Coast. When I eventually received a reply, it was on a letterhead with the imprint “Alvin Plantinga, President, Society of Christian Philosophers, University of Notre Dame.” After a little research, I knew that I wanted to study under Plantinga, who was not only a devout Christian but one of the leading philosophers in the world. I thus went from there to the University of Notre Dame, which was (and still is) both a leading graduate school in philosophy and one that has many Christians on its faculty. The training in philosophy I received at that time further strengthened my faith. I also learned that there was a revival of Christian thought taking place in philosophy departments throughout the country, something that has continued since I graduated. As a leading atheist philosopher, Quentin Smith, has noted, “God is not ‘dead’ in academia; he returned to life in the 1960’s and is now alive and well in his last academic stronghold, philosophy departments.” (Quentin Smith, “The Metaphysics of Naturalism,” *Philo*, Vol. 4, N. 2, 2001, pp. 196-97)

Since being here at Messiah University, I have particularly pursued questions on the intersection of science and religion, receiving three major external grants for work in the area. The area that I have become most well-known for is the argument for divine creation from the so-called fine-tuning of the universe – that is, the fact that the basic structure of the universe is set just right for life. I am now completing the first of a three volume set of books on the subject, with the first volume concentrating on the physical and cosmological evidence for fine-tuning, the second volume concentrating on the multiverse explanation (which is the leading non-theistic explanation), and the third concentrating on the philosophical and theological issues involved. In the future, I hope to publish a popular book on the subject.

This work has greatly strengthened my faith, especially since the spring of 2010. I not only discovered many cases of how the universe is fine-tuned for life, but also that it is fine-tuned so that we could have technology and can do science. Concerning the latter, if certain aspects of the fundamental physical structure of the universe were slightly different, humans could have existed, but they would have had no means of developing scientific technology; they

would have been forever stuck in the Stone Age. For me, this provides compelling evidence for divine providence in the basic structure of the world for both our existence and our science and technology; this means at the most basic level, our science and technology points to the providence of God. My research in this area has also given me a strong sense of how miraculous the structure of the universe and the world around us really is; everyday truly does seem like a miracle to me.

Finally, over the years I have also come to appreciate how God works in circuitous ways. As one example, when I first started studying philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, I had wondered why I spent so many years studying physics and working in physics labs. Since that time, however, my background in physics has become my greatest asset. Because God often works in this way, the providence of God in our lives will not always be obvious, but often can only be seen in hindsight. For students, this implies that unless one feels a specific calling to pursue a certain career, one should use college to develop one's gifts to the fullest, while being open to how exactly God might use those gifts in the future. As the book of James tells us, do not say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town, stay there a year, conduct business, and make money" since "you do not know what tomorrow will bring" (4:13-14). Rather, say "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that" (4:15). I thus encourage my students to be like the faithful servant in the Parable of the Talents and to invest in the development to their reasoning capacities through their study of philosophy or whatever other subject they are pursuing, but at the same time to recognize their need for God's guidance and providence.

Timothy Schoettle

I was raised Christian (Episcopalian) and have been Christian most of my life up to the present. However, in high school I had a charismatic physics professor who was an evangelical atheist. He argued that God was a mere superstition and that science could explain everything that religion had once explained. He argued that we once had mythology, but today we can replace science with myth. He argued that evolution can explain where human beings came from, and neurology can explain what the mind is. In effect, he argued that science tells us what is real and science does not tell us that God exists. On his view there is no place for religion.

I found my high school teacher's view of the world both deeply troubling and yet also difficult to reject. I desperately wanted to escape it, but didn't know how to. Under his sway, I became what might be called a reluctant agnostic. I wanted to believe, but I didn't see how to. When I went away to college, I wanted to learn how to reconcile faith with the success of modern science. My four years at Yale were quite fruitful in this regard.

I began as a physics major and continued through quantum mechanics, because I was interested in the measurement problem. What I discovered (roughly speaking) was that quantum mechanics can describe nearly all of the world with one important exception, the very acts of observation by which we come to know the world. If the challenge that science faces is to explain how we (the ones who do science) fit into the world, then quantum mechanics makes the problem worse, not better. I then switched to the English major and realized that some of the same issues were going on there. At Yale in the 1980's there was an increasing appreciation for the importance and the uncanniness of the act of reading. My focus as an English major was on the question of what it means to read. Most of my papers involved taking some great work of literature, like Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* or Dante's *Inferno*, and interpreting it as an allegory for how to read, specifically how to read the Bible. For example, in the *Inferno* each circle of Hell corresponds to a different kind of misreading, different sins being linked to different misreadings of the Bible. My focus was on the act by which one applies what one reads to one's life, that is, the act by which one *orients* oneself to what one reads. For example, one reads the Bible and asks, Who am I in this story? Am I a Pharisee? Am I a Sadducee? This act of orientation is absolutely crucial. Very few people knowingly do evil. Al-Qaeda does not see itself as the bad guy. Most abusive husbands don't recognize that they are abusers. If we are to learn anything of any practical value from what we read, it is essential that we have judgment in the Kantian sense (that is, the ability to apply general truths of the sort one reads about to the concrete situations one faces). The most important thing we can learn from a book is how to read and yet it is in some sense the most difficult thing for a book to express. Once again, it seems that in written texts, we can capture the world including everything except for the very acts by which we come to know it.

After graduating from college, I went on to study philosophy at the graduate level. I applied what I had learned to the field of philosophy. Reading Kant helped me to do so. For Kant we must limit the pretenses of reason in order to make room for faith. Kant acknowledges that we can study ourselves scientifically, but we should not make the mistake of assuming that the world as science describes it is ultimate reality. For Kant it is not. The self *qua* subject who thinks, feels, and knows, is not the self *qua* object in the world that science describes. (Much of German romanticism turns on rejecting this seemingly innocent identification of self *qua* subject with self *qua* object.) I would suggest that philosophy is (or includes) the study of humanity

insofar as we are made in the image of God. It is the study of self *qua* subject. In this respect, it is discontinuous with the natural sciences, which is the study of objects in the world, including the human brain and body. One does not learn what it means to be human or to have free will by reading scientific journal articles or textbooks. Our awareness of our humanity and of the difference between right and wrong and related matters can be evoked with a good metaphor, but cannot be made explicit in the way that a scientific theory can. What I learned, reading Kant, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and other philosophers was how to be a Christian while accepting that science has made great strides in describing the natural world. I was able to reclaim my faith and to reject the view that science is the measure of all things. This did not, however, lead me to be dismissive towards science; far from it. The successes of science are fantastic and are surely evidence of God's hand in human endeavors. In science, beauty is a guide to truth, and surely this is powerful evidence that we were designed to seek the truth, to raise questions, and to do science. If we are made in the image of God, then this shows itself most especially in our capacity for reason and reflection, which are essential to both science and philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Required Courses 30 hours (10 courses)

PHIL 101/102 *Problems in Philosophy*; **or** PHIL 102 *History of Philosophy*
PHIL 220 *Introduction to Logic*
PHIL 247 *Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*
PHIL 253 *Modern Philosophy*
PHIL 318 *Asian Philosophy*
PHIL 325/382 *Moral Problems* **or** PHIL 382 *Ethics*
PHIL 341 *Epistemology and Metaphysics*
PHIL 345 *Philosophy of Religion*
PHIL 352/354 *Existentialism* **or** PHIL 354 *Phenomenology*
PHIL 460 *Philosophy Seminar*

Additional Courses: Any combination of two philosophy courses that are numbered 300 or higher:

PHIL 342 *Aesthetics*
PHIL 356 *Mind and Machines*
PHIL 360 *Topics in Philosophy*
PHIL 362 *Philosophy of Science*
PHIL 382/325 *Ethics*; **or** PHIL 325 *Moral Problems*
INTE 391 *Internship (3 credits)*
PHIL 491 *Independent Study*
PHIL 497/498 *Philosophy Honors*

Note 1: You can take PHI 360 up to three times and get credit for each, as long as each course is on a different topic.

Note 2: All courses other than PHI 101, 102 and 460 are offered every other academic year.

PHILOSOPHY MINOR REQUIREMENTS

PHI 101 *Problems in Philosophy*; or PHI 102 *History of Philosophy* plus 15 credits of any combination of philosophy courses.

PHILOSOPHY COURSES FOR QUEST

Philosophy or Religion	PHIL 101 or PHIL 102 (Required for philosophy minor)
Ethics in the Modern World, World Views, or Pluralism in Contemporary America	PHIL 382 Ethics or PHIL 325 Moral Problems (Ethics Requirement); PHIL 345 Philosophy of Religion (Worldviews Requirement).
Non-Western Studies	PHIL 318 Asian Philosophy
Science, Technology & the World (STW)	PHIL 362 Philosophy of Science or PHIL 360 Minds and Machines

A total of four courses overlap QuEST. This means that if you fulfill the above QuEST requirements by taking philosophy, you must take two additional philosophy courses for the minor. However, for many majors in the sciences, the STW requirement is fulfilled by a course in their major (or waived), which means that one must take three additional philosophy courses over and above what is needed for QuEST to fulfill the requirements for the philosophy minor.

PHILOSOPHY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Upper-Division Philosophy Courses

PHIL 220 Logic, Professor David Schenk

The principal goal of this course is to teach the student to reason correctly, both in matters mundane and in the abstract world of philosophy. The science of determining and applying the criteria for correct reasoning just is the science of logic. Accordingly, the course involves substantial training in the three most common systems of formal logic—categorical, propositional, and predicate. Students also will receive elementary training in modal logic, a powerful contemporary system that facilitates assertions about necessity and contingency. Successful training in these systems entails the ability to translate all sorts of arguments from ordinary language into appropriate formal systems and then prove their validity or invalidity.

Skill in both formal and informal logic is necessary for anyone taking the LSAT. Accordingly, all pre-law students ought to regard this course as required.

PHIL 247 Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Professor Caleb Miller

This course covers the writings of important philosophers from the beginnings of Western philosophy in ancient Greece through the middle ages as well as the development of important philosophical ideas and questions during that period of time. Although we will read a number of philosophers from both the ancient and medieval period, we will focus on Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas.

PHIL 253, Modern Philosophy, Professor Timothy Schoettle

In the West, the period from Descartes to Kant was revolutionary. The Reformation had recently begun. Thinkers like Galileo were ushering in a new age of science. The church was no longer seen as the locus of all authority. Great thinkers presented bold new views of the relation between God and humanity and between mind and world. This class will examine some of these thinkers. Specifically, we will study the rationalists (Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz), the empiricists (Locke, Berkeley, and Hume), and Kant, who sought to synthesize rationalism and empiricism.

***PHIL 318 Asian Philosophy, Professor Robin Collins**

This course examines the philosophical underpinnings of the major religious and philosophical traditions of India and China: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. This course is valuable for those who desire a better understanding of these traditions and how they relate to Christianity. It differs from typical world religions courses in that we carefully explicate and examine the arguments for and against the core philosophical claims of these traditions and the various schools of thought within them. For example, we examine both the arguments in favor of reincarnation and the criticisms raised against this belief. We also discuss the similarities and differences between these belief systems and those in the west, especially Christianity.

**Fulfills the non-western QuEST requirement.*

***PHIL 325 Moral Problems, Professor Caleb Miller**

Are homosexual relationships morally right? What are the obligations of those in wealthy societies to those who are poor? Is it ever right to have an abortion? Is there an important moral difference between killing and letting die. These are some of the issues considered in this course in light of moral theory and careful philosophical reasoning.

**Fulfills ethics/worldviews QuEST requirement*

PHIL 341 Epistemology and Metaphysics, Professor David Schenk

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to prominent philosophical questions and theories in the science of being, called *metaphysics*, and the science of knowledge, called *epistemology*. Metaphysics studies the most fundamental conceptual structure of reality, while epistemology studies the boundaries of knowledge and the very concept of knowledge itself. The driving metaphysical question for this course will be, “which categories most fundamentally underlie everything that exists?” The driving epistemological question will be “when someone *actually* knows something versus merely *thinking* they know it, what differentiates the former from the latter?”

A secondary goal is to introduce the student to the methods, categories, and questions typical of analytic philosophy, by far the most successful and influential school of philosophy since the 20th century.

PHIL 342 Aesthetics, Professor Timothy Schoettle

What is beauty? What is creative genius? Has art come to an end? How is the divinity of God represented and experienced in art and nature? We will examine these and related questions in this introductory course on aesthetic theory. We will read selections from Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, Plato’s *Republic*, and Danto’s *After the End of Art*, as well as essays from Wilde, Emerson, Nietzsche, and Pater.

PHIL 345 Philosophy of Religion (Honors Section), Professor Robin Collins

This course will help you think through your faith, exposing you to some of the best thinking of leading philosophers of religion. It will focus on questions such as: In what ways should religious belief depend on faith and in what ways on reason? Are there good arguments for belief in God? Why do atheists reject belief in God? Is human free will compatible with Divine foreknowledge? How can a theist respond to the existence of evil? How can a loving God be reconciled with the existence of Hell? How can we make sense of Jesus’ death on a cross saving us from sin?

**Fulfills ethics/worldviews Quest requirement. It is only open to honors students.*

***PHIL 352: Existentialism, Professor Timothy Schoettle**

Existentialism, an intellectual movement that came to prominence in the 19th and 20th centuries, is concerned with the absence of objective values or meanings in the world and with how we (individually and as a culture) might react when we come to grips with this purported absence. Because of the lack of any metaphysical standards to guide one’s life, existentialists are especially concerned with the ideas of individual freedom and self-creation. We shall explore these and other major existentialist themes through selected readings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre.

**Note: Even though they have the same number, a student can take more than one PHIL 360 courses at the same time and get credit for each course. At present, this course fulfills the contemporary continental requirement for philosophy majors.*

PHIL 354: Phenomenology, Professor David Schenk

This course introduces the student to phenomenology, one of the most influential philosophical movements of the 20th century. The chief method of phenomenology is to describe the immediate contents and operations of consciousness just as they occur, without imposing any theories or presuppositions on them. Underlying its development at the turn of the 20th century were several basic philosophical problems: knowledge of the “external” world, the foundations of logic, and how to proceed in philosophy without presupposing all sorts of controversial assumptions. In the course of trying to solve these problems, phenomenology gave rise to numerous popular theories, including modern existentialism, structuralism, deconstruction and postmodernism. Lately phenomenology also has become influential in contemporary analytic philosophy, especially in theories of the mind. Anyone interested in the philosophy of mathematics, in metaphysics, in existentialism, or in contemporary theories in the social sciences and/or the humanities owes it to themselves to learn about phenomenology.

**Note: Even though Topics in Philosophy courses have the same number, a student can take more than one PHIL 360 courses at the same time and get credit for each course.*

***PHIL 360: Topics: Minds and Machines, by Professor Timothy Schoettle**

A machine with strong or general artificial intelligence is capable of thought, understanding, and consciousness. There is much debate about whether such machines can be built and (if they can be built) what it would mean for a computer to be capable of genuine understanding. In this course, we will examine these conflicting claims. In addition we will consider some of the philosophical, ethical, and practical implications of such machines. What will it mean to make a computer capable of moral reasoning?

**Fulfills science, technology and the world (STW) requirement.*

***PHIL 362: Philosophy of Science, Professor Robin Collins**

Science has had an enormous impact on forming the modern world, yet few in either the humanities or the sciences have seriously reflected on the nature of science and its limits, and what science is really telling us about the universe we live in. Such reflection is especially important for Christians. To engage in such reflection, the course is divided into three components. First, we carefully examine the methodology and historical development of science; second, we take a close, non-technical look at the revolutionary implications that quantum mechanics – the cornerstone of modern physics -- has for our understanding of reality; and third, we examine the implications of neuroscience for our view of the human person. A theme running throughout the course is the deep consonance between science and the Christian faith.

**Fulfills science, technology and the world (STW) requirement.*

***PHIL 382 Ethics, Professor Caleb Miller**

This is a course in moral theory. It will address such questions as, What is it for an action to be right (or wrong)?, What is justice?, and What is virtue? The course will also consider, by way of illustration, some more practical questions of applied ethics, such as, Is it right to have an abortion, or Is the death penalty a just form of criminal punishment? If you are committed to doing the right thing and would like to become more sophisticated in figuring what that is, this is the course for you.

**Fulfills ethics/worldviews QuEST requirement.*

PHIL 460 Philosophy Seminar, Professor Caleb Miller

This is the capstone course for the Philosophy Major and for the Humanities Major with a Philosophy Emphasis. It is intended primarily for seniors pursuing one of those two majors. The primary work for the course involves writing a major 20- to 25-page research paper. There will also be readings on philosophy and the Christian faith, and background readings for paper topics. In addition the course covers vocation and career issues related to philosophy and philosophical writing. Students in this course must be juniors or seniors and have had at least six (6) credits of 300 or 400 level philosophy courses.

WHY STUDY PHILOSOPHY?

Introduction

The following is a statement from Jordan Kotick when he was Vice-President of J.P. Morgan Chase:

“After four years and a Bachelor of Arts Degree under my belt (with a major in philosophy), I realized there was more philosophical work to be done. I decided to go to Graduate School. You can only imagine the reaction I received when I announced that I was going to spend the next two years beginning and hopefully completing my Master of Arts Degree in Philosophy. They shouted “Philosophy? What are you going to do with that?”

...of late, I have been pursuing a top job at one of the leading investment banks in the world. This position was “short listed” to 150 people as interviews went on concurrently in various countries around the globe. At the end of the process, I received the offer and am now working in New York as a Senior Strategist at one of Wall Street's leading firms. After accepting the offer, I asked the Board, who ultimately made the final decision, why I was chosen above the others. Without blinking an eye, the Head of the Strategic Hiring Committee stated a list of reasons, the very first of which was “Out of all the people we considered, you were the only one who studied philosophy, not to mention having a master’s degree in it. That told us immediately that you can think outside the box.”

- Philosophy explores fundamental issues about truth, ethics, God and human nature, and it helps students work out the foundations of their faith and rationally defend it. It also teaches students logical reasoning and reading comprehension skills, both of which are essential to success in nearly any desirable career.
- The ability to think carefully and logically is a great personal benefit in a student’s personal and spiritual development. It expands students’ views of the world, helps them make sound, well-reasoned decisions and helps them live consciously with a power of rational self-governance instead of merely absorbing the beliefs and opinions of those around them.
- A philosophy major provides ideal preparation for law school or seminary, and for careers in business, education, medical school, computer science, public service, management or any other profession requiring careful thinking and problem-solving skills. On average, philosophy majors score higher than any other major except Mathematics and Physics on the LSAT and GMAT graduate admissions tests. They also outscore any other major on the verbal and analytical sections of the GRE. Philosophy majors similarly outscore any other humanities major, and any major in education or the social sciences except for economics, on the GRE quantitative section. As a result, philosophy majors’ overall GRE scores rank fifth out of all majors, bested, in order, only by physics and astronomy, mathematical sciences, materials engineering, and chemical engineering.
- While the starting median salary for graduates with philosophy majors is only a fairly standard \$44,800, the mid-career median salary is a very solid \$85,100, which is well above the norm. Accordingly, regarding preparation for graduate school and career preparation, philosophy fares very well.
[Data from: <https://www.payscale.com/college-salary-report> , 2017]
- The requirements of the philosophy major and minor are well-suited to combining them with other majors, such as business, pre-med, history, English and computer science.

Why Messiah University?

As with any excellent program in philosophy, our philosophy major helps students develop both an in-depth understanding of philosophy and the critical thinking and logical reasoning skills necessary in today's world. Philosophy at Messiah, however, offers much more. First, unlike at many large universities, each faculty member in the department is personally committed to the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students both inside and outside the classroom. Second, we are committed to helping students develop a strong and engaged Christian faith; indeed, each of us believes this is what God called us to do with our lives. We believe that since worldviews rest on fundamental presuppositions, the ability to uncover and rationally assess such presuppositions is an essential skill Christians must have if they are to fruitfully engage the marketplace of ideas. This is one of the key skills philosophy teaches, and it is more essential today than ever before.

Even though much of the secular academy is hostile to Christian thought, there has been a great revival of Christianity in philosophy that resulted from applying the rigorous standards of philosophical inquiry to issues of faith. In an article that reads like an atheist "call to arms," leading atheist philosopher Quentin Smith laments the revival of Christian philosophy, noting that since the 1960s atheist philosophers have

. . . passively watched as a realist version of theism . . . began to sweep through the philosophical community, until today one-quarter or one-third of philosophy professors are theists, with most being orthodox Christians . . . God is not "dead" in academia; he returned to life in the 1960s and is now alive and well in his last academic stronghold, philosophy departments. (Quentin Smith, "The Metaphysics of Naturalism," *Philo*, N. 2, 2001, pp. 196-7)

In his book on the nature of reason, atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel concurs. Speaking primarily of other philosophers, he writes, "I am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers." (*The Last Word*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 130)

Given the tremendous philosophical resources currently available for understanding and defending the Christian faith, *we believe that no serious Christian who wants to engage today's world can afford to neglect philosophy.*

Alumni Testimonials



Christian Barnard (2017)
[Philosophy and Economics]

Christian Barnard is working for Reason Foundation, a leading public policy think tank based in California.

“I will be supporting the vice president of research, focusing on drug policy, environmental regulation, and new technologies. I must say, I felt that the position was a reach for me. There were 30+ applicants, many of whom had postgraduate degrees. Given these facts, and my limited experience in policy, I was surprised when the VP of research reached out for an interview.

In early April, I had the first of three interviews with Reason. After discussing the position, my experience, and my interests, the VP commented that he was intrigued by my philosophy background. He observed that my philosophical training could be particularly useful in developing a legal framework for autonomous vehicles, among other things.”

“To my surprise, he then began asking me pointed questions about the Trolley Problem. Of course, I highlighted the basic distinctions between killing and letting die, as well as the possibility that the single person tied to the alternate track could be a "utility monster," who feels more pain than the other two victims on the primary track. After a ten-minute exchange on various formulations of the Trolley Problem, as well as the philosophy of AI, the interviewer seemed very excited. He remarked that many emerging policy/law problems require this kind of philosophical thinking. After several weeks and two more interviews, Reason made me a job offer. Without the critical thinking and writing skills that the four of you helped me develop, I know this opportunity would not have been open to me. **I can truly say that classes like Moral Problems and Minds and Machines directly helped to get me a job!**”

“I often think back to class discussions with each of you. I miss those conversations, the academic rigor, and the intellectual honesty the four of you so wonderfully exemplified.”



Cory Mellinger (2011)
[Philosophy and Business]

Cory Mellinger runs a WEBstaurantStore.com office (North America’s largest online foodservice distributor of restaurant equipment and supplies) in Reno, NV.

“The e-commerce environment is fast-paced and ever-changing. Failure to think thoroughly through a decision can be immensely detrimental to the success of the company. Likewise, in today’s culture everyone is filled with ideas that that they promise will either work or be the next big thing. Couple that with changes that happen so fast it would make your head spin, and alas you have arrived in an environment where philosophers

thrive.”

“Philosophy to me is like a craft. Something that must be taught carefully otherwise the individuals trying to obtain the craft would be more prone to erroneous thinking. At Messiah, the professors were always there to help cultivate students in learning how to think and behave like a philosopher. Small class settings and great professors enable this type of education. In short, my business classes have taught me a lot of factual knowledge regarding the business world (which I am not downplaying fully its significance), but philosophy has offered me more in dealing with the e-commerce business environment and life challenges that no other major could have.”



Carrie Bisciotti (2013)
[Recruiter]

Carrie Bisciotti is a recruiter for TEKsystems, an IT staffing company in Harrisburg.

“Last year my family and I met with my dad’s friend who founded a financial company in Colorado. When I told him I studied philosophy, he appreciated it, being a Philosophy major himself, and also because he said the study of philosophy allows people to better approach situations thoughtfully and creatively. With my job at TEKsystems, I really have had to think on my feet and use the problem-solving skills which philosophy has given me.”



Christina Beall (2010)
[Associate, Teach For America]

Christina was a Business Administration major with minor in Philosophy. Currently she is an Associate, Office of the Chief Marketing Officer/Senior VP of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships for Teach for America. She regularly assists organization leadership in special projects and provides a range of administrative support.

“Skills that I use on a daily basis, ones that have set me apart from other job candidates and coworkers, were developed and fostered in my philosophy courses. Things like analytical and innovative thinking, good judgment and strong decision-making, and clear and concise communication are in high demand in the business environment. It is also imperative to be flexible and adaptable in this ever-changing realm of opportunity and risk. This comes more naturally after being conditioned through philosophy to be aware of the complexities in each situation and see multiple perspectives.”

“I am now often asked “Why philosophy?” by managers and coworkers but it comes from a place of respect and admiration. Having that background gives you an edge and provides additional value and weight to your opinions. I would strongly encourage any student to consider philosophy as a complement to his or her other studies.”



Scott Forbes (2004)
[Business Systems Analyst]

After graduating with a major in philosophy in 2004, Scott took a position as a business systems analyst in May, 2005 for Stallion Oilfield Services, Houston Texas, where he is currently employed. After a year on the job, he began a master's in business administration program at the University St. Thomas in Houston, earning his MBA in May 2009.

Scott had this to say about the value of philosophy in an email:

“It is not an exaggeration to say that, of the 3 degree plans I have followed (biology, philosophy and a master's in business), philosophy has been the most useful at work. No field of study could prepare me for the various situations I face at my job, but philosophy has provided me with the logical training and tools necessary to analyze, solve, and discuss complex problems, particularly those involved in designing and maintaining databases. I believe, without reservation, my education in philosophy has helped me find success in business.”

“At our alumni gathering in 2009, Scott told Dr. Miller that when he first started as a business analyst, his boss was amazed that he already knew how to do the kind of analysis he was asked to do, at which point Scott informed his boss that his training in philosophy provided the necessary skills. Further, when Dr. Collins emailed him about how we could improve our philosophy program, Scott's main recommendation was to get the word out about the value of philosophy, particularly to majors in the sciences.”



Eric Allen (2006)
[Philosophy and Psychology]

Eric Allen runs the business of Holistic Life Consultants (www.holisticlifeconsultants.com), where he helps business owners, executives, recent graduates, and parents successfully navigate through life with an increased sense of satisfaction and personal success.

“Understanding where people are coming from culturally, spiritually, philosophically, and psychologically is a potent recipe for successful therapy and coaching. The marriage of a strong Psychology and Philosophy background is what has driven the success of my business. It has been the centerpiece of what sets my company apart from other life coaches and therapists. It has also allowed me to navigate through the business world myself, moving up from supervisory positions to being an executive director of company. In sum, philosophy has been the lifeblood of my work in therapy, coaching, and business.”



Jeff Williams (1999)
[Pastor]

After graduating with a double major in Bible and philosophy, Jeff went to seminary, eventually becoming Senior Pastor at Nappanee Brethren in Christ Church, Nappanee Indiana. This is what he had to say about the value of his study of philosophy:

“I can think of no other secondary major which would have helped me nearly as much [as philosophy]. More specifically, the questions of philosophy frequently intersected questions of faith and theology. We spend time wrestling with issues crucial for articulating the Christian faith in today’s world. We thought carefully about other religions and compared their philosophical advantages (internal consistency, logical problems, whether they resonated with our common, human experience, etc.). We thought systematically through difficult Christian theological issues such as the atonement, the problem of evil, and many more. . . As I think back on the journey I have made on many of these issues, I owe much to those philosophy classes over 10 years ago. *Those classes were more helpful to me than any theology classes I have had, including those in seminary.*” (Italics added.)

Angela Ellis-Hennesy (2006)
[Law School Student]

Angela graduated from Messiah College in 2006 with a humanities major with a philosophy concentration. In the fall of 2009, she applied for a public interest fellowship for law school after working for 2 ½ years as a case manager for a non-profit agency in Philadelphia that provides behavioral and health services to indigent children. After being in the 91st percentile on the standard Law School Admission Test (LSAT), this is what she had to say in an email to Dr. Collins:

“For what it's worth, I felt that my degree in philosophy prepared me for the LSAT really well. It's an entire test focused on logical reasoning, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of arguments, etc. (You can share this with your students - or their parents - who may wonder whether a degree in philosophy is "practical")”



Kevin Driver (2003)
[Medical Doctor]

Kevin Driver graduated with a bachelor's degree from Messiah College in both philosophy and biochemistry in 2003. In the spring of 2007, Kevin Driver received his medical degree from Columbia University's highly regarded College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Asked if he felt academically prepared for one of the nation's top ranked and most challenging medical educations, he replied, "Absolutely! I started out on an equal footing with students from many well-known, prestigious colleges."

Asked about whether his philosophy major helped him, he had this to say:

"My background in philosophy makes me a better physician without a doubt. The type of clinical reasoning used in day to day medical practice is dependent on logical relationships that, while implicit, are extraordinarily complex. . . . My task is to put together scattered signs, symptoms, and laboratory and radiologic findings into a unified and elegant diagnosis, and then devise a treatment plan based on good evidence from clinical studies considering each patient's unique preferences and often complex list of medications and other medical problems. And, perhaps most importantly, my training in philosophy helps me do this all efficiently. Studying philosophy from an evangelical Christian perspective also enables me to more effectively understand and work through difficult decisions regarding treatment options as well as end of life issues."

Asked for his advice to students considering philosophy, Kevin said:

"Obviously, go for it. The more common problem that I encountered was students who failed to consider philosophy because they had more specific and practical career goals and felt that philosophy was too esoteric. Take a class or two, and imagine how that kind of rigorous analysis and critical reasoning from the philosophy classroom can complement your more particular interests."



Ben Stolz (2010)
[Americorps Program]

Ben Stolz, a 2010 Philosophy major, went on to become part of the highly competitive Americorps Program, Teach for America, and is now Outreach Director at an education non-profit called Educators 4 Excellence that works to involve teachers in the education policymaking process. Here is an excerpt from a recent testimonial he sent us:

“Before I stepped foot on campus as a student, I can recall registering for “Problems in Philosophy” with great trepidation. I admired analytical thinking growing up, but did not think that I was especially proficient in it. Nevertheless, when I started attending class, I found myself succeeding in something I respected and admired since my childhood. That success ultimately led me to attending a meeting for those who were interested in becoming a philosophy major.”

“As I interacted with the Department more - via professors and fellow students - I began to appreciate the impact they had on me. My professors held me to high standards, not letting me get away with sloppy thinking or writing. My peers pushed me to communicate complex subjects clearly and simply, without being simplistic. Both my professors and peers offered their advice inside and *outside* of the classroom. (Star Trek references may or may not have been frequently used for metaphors). Yet, it was not until later on in my college career that I began to see the practical application of all of this rigorous training.”

“As a student, I was fortunate enough to visit El Salvador on an ecological service trip and study at Oxford and Cairo University. Upon returning from these transformative trips, I was inspired anew to apply my learning to my immediate context in Grantham. After speaking with my advisor, Dr. Collins, he assisted me with turning my Departmental Honors project into a proposal that sought to establish the philosophical underpinnings of the satellite house I lived in called the Reconciliation House. Through this project, I was able to explore and define the numerous philosophical facets of reconciliation and peacemaking and in turn, offer tangible ways of implementing grassroots peacemaking efforts. The skills of careful analysis and synthesis greatly aided me in constructing a viable proposal.”

“Nevertheless, what was so wonderful about my thesis was that it expanded beyond traditional philosophical study. I found that I not only was able to strengthen my critical thinking skills, but I had the opportunity to explore my strengths, vocational opportunities and how I ought to orient myself in the world.”

“As a college graduate of Messiah College, I can see how philosophy has helped shape where I am at this moment. The education I received at Messiah has empowered me to turn my thoughts into actions. Immediately after graduation, I began teaching 6th grade Mathematics with the Americorps program, Teach For America. I currently am an Outreach Director at an education non-profit called Educators 4 Excellence, working to involve teachers in the education policymaking process. In both positions, from teaching logic to my 6th graders to imagining different scenarios for policy implementation, I have found my training in philosophy to be immensely useful and practical.”

“Furthermore, my education at Messiah has also led me to think seriously about the role of faith in my life. This fact became especially evident in a conversation I recently had with my roommate. He came to me with a question: "How do you communicate your faith commitment to people who are not usually receptive to experiential accounts of Christianity?" To my surprise, I provided a satisfying answer for him and as a result, came to see how my education at Messiah had helped me learn to authentically, compellingly and creatively speak of my own faith journey.”

What Employers Are Saying

From [The Guardian](#), Tuesday 20 November 2007 (The *Guardian* is a leading newspaper in the United Kingdom.) (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2007/nov/20/choosingadegree.highereducation>)

Note: These quotations pertain to the United Kingdom, but similar trends are occurring in the US; the article also notes that philosophical training is becoming more and more in demand as employers have increasingly come to recognize the value of the kind of mental training that a philosophy major provides.

- Lucy Adams, human resources director of Serco, a services business and a consultancy firm, says: "Philosophy lies at the heart of our approach to recruiting and developing our leadership, and our leaders. We need people who have the ability to look for different approaches and take an open mind to issues. These skills are promoted by philosophical approaches."
- Fiona Czerniawska, director of the Management Consultancies Association's think tank, says: "A philosophy degree has trained the individual's brain and given them the ability to provide management-consulting firms with the sort of skills that they require and clients demand. These skills can include the ability to be very analytical, provide clear and innovative thinking, and question assumptions."
- Deborah Bowman, associate dean for widening participation at St George's, University of London, which offers medicine and health sciences courses, says philosophers are increasingly sought after by the NHS: "Graduates of philosophy who come in to graduate-entry medicine, or to nursing courses, are very useful. Growth areas in the NHS include clinical ethicists, who assist doctors and nurses. Medical ethics committees and ethics training courses for staff are also growing. More and more people are needed to comment on moral issues in healthcare, such as abortion."

Employment Statistics

“The Higher Education Careers Services Unit (Hecsu), which also collates data of this kind, agrees philosophers are finding it easier to secure work. Its figures show that, in 2001, 9.9% of philosophy graduates were unemployed six months after graduation. In 2006, just 6.7% were. On average, 6% of all graduates were unemployed six months after graduation.”

Further Testimonials



Eric J. Deitch
Adjunct Instructor at Messiah University
Business Consultant

When I was first a philosophy major, people often asked me about the value of studying philosophy. Today, I believe it is even more evident that philosophy is not only of great value – but indispensable. After teaching philosophy for 23 years and working closely with leaders in business and government for 15 years, there are two vitally important things, in my opinion, that students should understand as they pursue careers: the role of advocacy in all organizations and the value of critical thinking. These areas are rarely given *primary* focus in disciplines other than philosophy. Advocacy is not limited to law and politics. In organizations, people advocate for their views and values. Decisions are made based on what is seen to be the best argument. Learning how to argue effectively and critically evaluate the arguments of others are indispensable skills. When people advocate illogical, factually wrong, or unethical views in a seemingly persuasive way and no one responds critically with a better argument, the results can be disastrous. The decision makers in Enron, WorldCom, GM, AIG, Lehman Brothers, and Wachovia believed they knew the best arguments. They were wrong. I have seen repeatedly how critical thinking skills and advocating ethical values lead to good judgments in organizations. Studying philosophy is excellent training for confronting successfully the many challenges facing people today in life and, especially, in their careers.

Further Information

To find out further information, you may email or call the faculty in the Philosophy Department:

- Dr. Robin Collins rcollins@messiah.edu, (717-796-1800 ext. 3100)
- Dr. Timothy Schoettle tschoett@messiah.edu (717-796-1800 ext. 2411)

We can also help you get in touch with either a current student or with department alumni if you would like.

Appendix: Salaries Listed By Profession from Payscale.Com (2017)

NOTE: There are 489 majors listed in payscale.com. Because of the number of majors listed, I have only included the top 10 majors, the majors with rankings close to philosophy, and some of the lowest ranking majors. With a ranking of 157, Philosophy ranks in the top third of majors.

Rank	Major	Degree Type	Early-Career Pay	Mid-Career Pay
1	Petroleum Engineering	Bachelor's	\$94,600	\$175,500
2	Actuarial Mathematics	Bachelor's	\$56,400	\$131,700
3	Actuarial Science	Bachelor's	\$61,200	\$130,800
4	Nuclear Engineering	Bachelor's	\$69,000	\$127,500
5	Chemical Engineering	Bachelor's	\$70,300	\$124,500
6	Marine Engineering	Bachelor's	\$73,900	\$123,200
7	Economics and Mathematics	Bachelor's	\$60,000	\$122,900
8	Geophysics	Bachelor's	\$54,100	\$122,200
9	Cognitive Science	Bachelor's	\$54,000	\$121,900
10	Electrical Power Engineering	Bachelor's	\$68,600	\$119,100
69	Facilities Management	Bachelor's	\$55,100	\$99,900
70	Industrial Management	Bachelor's	\$52,600	\$99,200
93	Information Systems Management	Bachelor's	\$55,300	\$95,200
94 (tie)	Architectural Engineering	Bachelor's	\$61,200	\$95,100
94 (tie)	East Asian Studies	Bachelor's	\$42,300	\$95,100
94 (tie)	Plastics Engineering Technology	Bachelor's	\$61,600	\$95,100
97	Agricultural Engineering (AE)	Bachelor's	\$56,100	\$94,400
107 (tie)	Business Information Systems	Bachelor's	\$55,000	\$92,400
107 (tie)	Operations & Supply Chain Management	Bachelor's	\$53,900	\$92,400
109	Operations Management (OM)	Bachelor's	\$54,600	\$92,300
110	Information Technology Management	Bachelor's	\$53,800	\$91,900
130 (tie)	Applied Computer Science	Bachelor's	\$53,100	\$88,800
130 (tie)	Business & Marketing	Bachelor's	\$45,700	\$88,800
132	Chemistry	Bachelor's	\$45,700	\$88,000
133	Aviation Management	Bachelor's	\$43,900	\$87,900
147 (tie)	Agribusiness	Bachelor's	\$45,700	\$86,400
147 (tie)	Product Design	Bachelor's	\$50,600	\$86,400
149 (tie)	Information Technology (IT)	Bachelor's	\$52,300	\$86,300
149 (tie)	Marketing & Management	Bachelor's	\$44,900	\$86,300
151	Technical Communication	Bachelor's	\$43,900	\$86,200
152	International Relations	Bachelor's	\$46,400	\$86,100
153	Russian Language	Bachelor's	\$48,700	\$85,700
154	Sales & Marketing	Bachelor's	\$47,300	\$85,600
155	Business Communication	Bachelor's	\$43,900	\$85,500

156	Manufacturing Engineering Technology	Bachelor's	\$58,700	\$85,200
157 (tie)	Occupational Therapy (OT)	Bachelor's	\$53,500	\$85,100
157 (tie)	Philosophy	Bachelor's	\$44,800	\$85,100
159 (tie)	Aviation	Bachelor's	\$50,700	\$84,900
159 (tie)	Marketing	Bachelor's	\$45,200	\$84,900
161	Networks & Telecommunications	Bachelor's	\$46,100	\$84,600
162 (tie)	Advertising	Bachelor's	\$41,800	\$84,200
162 (tie)	Radiation Therapy	Bachelor's	\$61,800	\$84,200
201	American Studies	Bachelor's	\$43,900	\$79,900
202	Retail & Consumer Science	Bachelor's	\$46,000	\$79,800
203	Environmental Design	Bachelor's	\$42,300	\$79,600
223	Computer & Network Administration	Bachelor's	\$52,000	\$76,900
224 (tie)	Agribusiness Management	Bachelor's	\$45,100	\$76,800
224 (tie)	Business Administration	Bachelor's	\$46,300	\$76,800
226	Agronomy	Bachelor's	\$46,200	\$76,700
240	Logistics	Bachelor's	\$51,700	\$75,300
241 (tie)	Computer Graphics Technology (CGT)	Bachelor's	\$42,500	\$75,200
241 (tie)	General Science	Bachelor's	\$41,600	\$75,200
243	Biology	Bachelor's	\$41,200	\$75,100
309	Apparel Merchandising	Bachelor's	\$42,200	\$70,800
310	Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	Bachelor's	\$43,600	\$70,700
311	Criminal Justice Administration	Bachelor's	\$39,700	\$70,400
359	Earth Science	Bachelor's	\$45,600	\$65,800
360 (tie)	Humanities	Bachelor's	\$41,300	\$65,600
360 (tie)	Spanish Language	Bachelor's	\$41,100	\$65,600
362	Organizational Management	Bachelor's	\$43,500	\$65,500
416 (tie)	Animal Science	Bachelor's	\$36,700	\$60,800
416 (tie)	Religion	Bachelor's	\$37,800	\$60,800
418	Education	Bachelor's	\$39,500	\$60,600
419 (tie)	Drawing & Painting	Bachelor's	\$40,000	\$60,300
419 (tie)	Exercise & Sports Science	Bachelor's	\$37,500	\$60,300
472	Therapeutic Recreation	Bachelor's	\$35,200	\$50,700
473	Bible Studies & Theology	Bachelor's	\$33,500	\$50,500
474	Counseling Psychology	Bachelor's	\$36,200	\$50,100
484	Family Studies	Bachelor's	\$35,400	\$44,500
485	Child Development	Bachelor's	\$32,300	\$44,000
486	Early Childhood & Elementary Education	Bachelor's	\$35,000	\$43,600
487	Veterinary Technology	Bachelor's	\$31,800	\$43,100
488	Child & Family Studies	Bachelor's	\$32,000	\$42,100
489	Early Childhood Education	Bachelor's	\$32,100	\$40,400

PHILOSOPHY VOCATIONAL BOOKLET

I. Introduction

In deciding what to do after graduation, the first thing to do is to discern which of the following four paths you might want to consider after graduation:

- (1) Employment in private industry, government, or a private non-profit organization.
- (2) Professional or graduate school other than philosophy.
- (3) Serve with a national government-based service organization, such as Teach for America, AmeriCorps, or the Peace Core.
- (4) Graduate school in philosophy.

Although there is significant overlap in recommended preparation for each path, there are also significant differences. The following sections present recommendations for preparing for each path.

II. Track #1 – Employment after Graduation

The *general skills* philosophy provides you with are essential to succeeding in a wide variety of jobs. Further, they are useful in almost any profession, and hence are *transferable* from one profession to another. Among these skills are *an ability to comprehend complex arguments and texts, an ability to clarify, analyze, and solve difficult and vaguely defined problems, an ability to organize ideas and issues, an ability to respectfully consider alternative points of view, an ability to assess pros and cons of an issue, an ability to boil down complex data, an ability to find and articulate hidden assumptions, and an ability to communicate effectively.*

Not only are these skills tremendously valuable in almost any profession, but because they are transferable, they give one the ability to adapt to the ever changing work environment. *This adaptability is something that is essential for many jobs in the twenty-first century and promises to be essential in the decades ahead as the work-place continues change at an ever rapid rate because of competition from foreign markets and the development of new information technologies.*

To give you some idea of the kinds of jobs that these general skills are applicable in, here is a partial list:

Administration	Fund Raiser	Missionary
Advertising/Copy Writer	Grant Writer	Museum Manager
Arbitrator	Human Resource Manager	Policy Researcher
Business Analyst	Insurance Agent	Press Secretary
Business Consultant	Intramural Director	President of the United States
Christian Ministries	Inventory Control Specialist	Public Relations Specialist
Claim Adjuster/Examiner	Legal Assistant	Religious Education Director
Congressional Staff Member	Lawyer	Research
Consumer Advocate	Librarian	Researcher
Contract Administrator	Lobbyist	Social Worker
Counseling	Management Consultant	Student Affairs Administrator
Editor	Market Research Analyst	Technical Writer
FBI/CIA Agent	Marketing/Sales Manager	Volunteer Coordinator
Foreign Student Advisor	Mediator	

Notice that for many of these jobs, there is no specialized major that prepares you for the job. Rather, it is the transferable skills mentioned above that are crucial. For example, as an extreme case, there is no specific major for being an FBI or CIA agent; instead, they train you for the skills you need. They primarily look for the right personality and skills, not a specific major you have taken, although some majors will certainly be more helpful in giving you the necessary skills and background than others. Similarly, there is no specific major for being a grant writer, a fundraiser, or a volunteer coordinator. Once again, it is the transferable skills mentioned above that matter. For some of the jobs, either a double major or a minor in a related field is also helpful – for example, for being a business analyst or marketing/sales manager.

Besides being aware of the kind of jobs that are out there, there are specific things you can do to increase your chances of employment. These are listed below.

Preparing while at Messiah University

1. Apply your philosophy skills outside the classroom. This could be in participating in some on-campus group, or as part of an internship, practicum, or service learning. A good letter from an employer, especially one that articulates the value of the transferable skills mentioned above, will go a long way toward helping you secure your first job. Go to the Internship Center and Service-Learning Center on campus for a list of these opportunities. *Internships and service learning are extremely important. Employers are looking for people with experience applying what they have learned in college to real-life situations.*
2. Go to the Career Center and take advantage of the resources there.
3. Research one or two fields that interest you in the above list (or some other), and then find out what working in those areas involve. Next, consider what you would say to a prospective employer in the field: how has philosophy prepared you for the specific job? Why do you want to do that job? etc.
4. Take several classes or a minor in a non-humanities field, particularly an area that teaches you quantitative skills
5. Look widely for employment. There are many jobs out there that you might have never thought of but for which you would be a good fit.
6. Network with as many people as you can. Take advantage of the falconet, the online alumni directory. (Go to the Career Center for help using it.)

Finding and Applying for a Job

1. Consider moving to another part of the country or the world for employment. Often, the kind of jobs that philosophy skills are most useful for are found in urban areas.
2. Network as much as possible with others where you live. Many jobs are found through friends and acquaintances.
3. Make sure your resume looks professional, and you highlight the relevant skills. Further, if you obtain an interview, be prepared to be able to explain to your prospective employer the value of the skills you learned in philosophy. For example, be able to explain to them that in your courses

you were required to write papers and take essay exams in which you were addressed alternative points of views and major objections to your thesis in as fair a way as possible. Thus, you developed skills of being able to understand the points of views of others, and to articulate those points of view.

4. Practice interviewing. Exercise good social skills – e.g., smile and be as engaging as possible. Except in rare cases, dress professionally. You should especially be prepared to answer the common question: What can you do with a philosophy degree? Perhaps memorize a brief list and one or two testimonies of what makes philosophy valuable. For example, a good idea would be to memorize a short list of philosophy skills that you can explain to your prospective employer. You might even hand him a copy of such a list and go through it.
5. Many employers are looking for someone who can take individual initiative and exercise higher than normal reasoning and expression skills; these employers will be more likely to hire a philosophy undergraduate. Especially when combined with another major or minor – such as business – a philosophy degree can help you stand out to those employers who are looking for something more than the ordinary.
6. Act confident, but also do not come across as a “know it all.” In other words, act confident that you have the skills to learn what you need to learn. Acting confident is contagious: just by acting this way, the employer will think you are competent, even if your resume shows deficiencies.
7. Be willing to apply to many places; to do volunteer work (for experience); and take positions below your abilities. However, be careful in taking a position that does not use your abilities or that you find boring. For many people, it will be hard to do well in such a job, and thus could hurt you in the long run. In general, it is better to take a lower paying job that uses your skills and energizes you than to take a higher-paying job that fails to use your skills. The reason is that doing well at the lower paying job will open doors for higher paying jobs, or promotion within the organization in which you are working.

Some Tips for after Obtaining Employment

- (1) Be on time to work and meetings; in fact, be early if possible. This minor thing will create a strong impression that you are reliable.
- (2) Complete tasks as soon as you can discern what to do. For example, if a task takes less than two or three minutes – such as responding to an email – get in the habit of doing it right away. Few things impress employers more than someone who is “on the ball.” In fact, don’t just aim to complete tasks on time. *Complete them significantly ahead of time if possible.* This relieves your supervisor of anxiety about whether the task will get done and builds trust in your reliability. For example, answer emails right away with something – if nothing more, an acknowledgement that you received the email. (You will also need to find a way of keeping track of emails to come back to; see (4) below). Once you get in the habit this is easy to do and it builds a reserve of positive impressions of you.
- (3) Learn to break complex tasks into small steps so that you can begin working on them right away – otherwise, you are liable to procrastinate or feel overwhelmed. If nothing else, you can get started on the first step.

- (4) Find ways of keeping track of items that need to be done. For example, develop a color coding system for emails, such as orange for those that need to be done soon and blue for reference. Then, every few days go back and check to make sure you have started on or done the tasks that need to be done.
- (5) Be willing to ask for help or advice, but it is a good idea to take notes – don't depend on your memory.. I take electronic notes that I can come back to.
- (6) Develop an organizational system – this is particularly important as you are given more and more tasks: a “tipping point” is eventually reached in which you will be unable to keep track of everything in your head and an organizational system will become crucial.
- (7) Use the mental “back burner.” Studies show that the best way to find solutions to difficult problems is to first immerse yourself in the problem and then take a break from it. Surprisingly, the mind continues to work on the problem while you are doing other things. This might occur in hours, or days, or even months. Suddenly solutions will occur to you out of the blue, or an opportunity will come by that you are ready to take advantage of. But, this will not happen if you wait until the last minute to get your head into the task. You should start on the task *early* until you feel blocked, and then put it down for a while. Also, getting started early allows you to take into account unanticipated things that might come up.
- (8) Learn to be truthful to yourself and your supervisor about what you are able to get done well. Most employers would rather have you be honest that you are overloaded or not good at a task than to have it not done or done poorly. The honesty allows them to assign it to someone else.
- (9) Avoid criticizing others. If you do that very much, people will suspect that you are doing the same to them behind their backs. Further, be careful about sending comments through email or post them on Facebook, unless you are willing for everyone to see them. Such comments unintentionally easily become public.

II. Track #2 -- Pre-Professional Programs

A philosophy major alone, or in tandem with some other courses, will suffice for getting into many graduate and professional programs. Some possibilities are:²

1. Anthropology

2. Art

*Significant course work in art required.

3. Business

4. Computer Science

* A few schools do not require a major in computer science for admission.

5. Criminal Justice

6. Drama

7. Economics

² The listing below is a summary of graduate and professional school prerequisites listed in the 1995 issue of *U. S. News and World Report's, Best Graduate Schools*, pp. 20-26. For more information, see this issue of *U. S. News and World Report*.

8. Education
 9. Health Services Administration
 10. International Studies
 11. Journalism
 12. Law
 13. Library Science
 14. Medicine
 15. Ministry
 16. Pharmacy
 *requires two years of course work in science
 17. Philosophy
 18. Physical Therapy
 **course work in physics, chemistry, and biology needed.

19. Political Science
 20. Psychology
 *Majority of applicants to graduate psychology programs have an undergraduate degree in field, though this is not required.
 21. Public Administration
 22. Public Health
 23. Social Work
 *Some social science course work desirable.
 24. Sociology
 *Some undergraduate course work in sociology needed.
 25. Veterinary Medicine.
 *Biology course work desirable.

Comments on Particular Pre-Professional Programs

1. Law

Philosophy is well-known as one of the best preparations for law school. Why? Because philosophical training largely involves training in the very skills a lawyer must daily practice, such as the ability to effectively communicate and argue for or against a position. Moreover, many of the sub-fields of philosophy--such as epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of science, and social and political philosophy--are directly relevant to legal issues. For example, ethics is extremely valuable for almost all legal issues such as those involving business and medical ethics; epistemology is directly relevant to examining standards of evidence; the nature of free will and the human mind (both issues in metaphysics) are directly relevant to assessing moral and legal responsibility; and philosophy of science is particularly valuable for those intending to practice technological or scientific sectors of law; and social and political philosophy is quite relevant to a whole host of social and political issues--such as the nature of justice, the justification of punishment--that many lawyers must deal with. Finally, the kind of additional training that philosophy provides is particularly valuable for making a specifically Christian contribution to the legal profession.

A word of warning:

Those interested in law, however, should be aware that unless you are able to get into the top third of law schools, you do not have a good chance of being employed as a lawyer.

2. Medicine and Health Professions

Medical schools today are increasingly looking for breadth of training, particularly in the humanities. Training in ethics, particularly medical ethics, is of obvious value. Moreover, given the increasing challenge raised to traditional conceptions of science and evidence by practitioners of alternative medicine, philosophy of science and epistemology will likely be of even greater value in the future. Finally, because metaphysics deals with questions regarding the nature of the human person--for example, the mind/body problem and the question of free will--it promises to be of increasing value as more "holistic" approaches to medical practice continue to gain ground.

3. Computer Science:

Much of the cutting edge research in computer science involves clarifying and analyzing ill-defined problems so that a solution can be found and then implemented on a computer. Because much of

philosophy involves clarifying and analyzing ill-defined problems, it develops skills that are very useful for computer scientists. Moreover, philosophy--particularly philosophy of mind--is of particular value to those who are working in the area of artificial intelligence since work in this field involves extensive analyses of the nature of mind and intelligence, something philosophers are specifically trained to do. Indeed, this is one of the few areas where philosophers are hired specifically for their philosophical training.

4. Government

The general skills that the philosophy major/minor helps develop are particularly valuable in this area. Indeed, according to congressman Lee Hamilton, 9th District, Indiana:

It seems to me that philosophers have acquired skills which are very valuable to a member of Congress. The ability to analyze a problem carefully and consider it from many points of view is one. Another is the ability to communicate ideas clearly in a logically compelling form. A third is the ability to handle the many different kinds of problems which occupy the congressional agenda at any time. (Quoted in APA publication, *Careers for Philosophers*, 1983.)

5. Christian Ministry, Bible, Religion, and Pre-seminary Majors

Since all the philosophy courses here at Messiah deal with core issues--such as the problem of evil or the nature of free will--that are directly relevant to the Christian faith, philosophy should be of much value to students who plan on going on into Christian ministry, religion, or theology. In fact, philosophy is generally a better training for seminary than Christian ministries and Bible, since many of the courses in the latter majors will duplicate what you will be required to take at seminary. On the other hand, philosophy will give you a valuable foundation for the courses you will take in seminary.

6. Psychology

Issues in metaphysics related to the mind/body problem and free will would be of particular relevance to a major of psychology and with issues covered in a philosophy of science course.

7. History

Courses in the history of philosophy, such as Messiah's Ancient and Medieval philosophy course, should be of particular relevance to a history major.

IV. Track #3 --Government Service Organizations

There are several organizations specifically designed for recent college graduates. By choosing the right program, you can put into practice, and build on, the skills – such as that of analysis, logic, and communication – that you learned in philosophy. This will give you valuable experience for obtaining employment after you have finished the program.

Below is a list of programs with brief explanations for each one:

AmeriCorps:

AmeriCorps is a government program in which state and national members engage in direct service and capacity-building to address unmet community needs. AmeriCorps members can:

Tutor and mentor disadvantaged youth	Clean parks and streams
Fight illiteracy	Manage or operate after-school programs
Improve health services	Help communities respond to disasters
Build affordable housing	Build organizational capacity
Teach computer skills	

Members work full or part-time over a 9-to-12 month period and are trained through AmeriCorps and their organization. Members receive a modest living allowance, student-loan forbearance, health coverage, and child care for those who qualify. After successfully completing their term of service, they receive an AmeriCorps Education Award. There are various specific programs that fall under AmeriCorps, such as AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps NCCC.

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is dedicated to eliminating poverty by helping individuals in low-income neighborhoods make positive changes for themselves in their community. AmeriCorps NCCC stands for National Civilian Community Corps. The Mission of AmeriCorps NCCC is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service. In partnership with nonprofit organizations, state and local agencies, and faith-based and other community organizations, members complete service projects throughout the region they are assigned. It requires an intensive 10-month commitment. Members serve in teams of ten to twelve and are assigned to projects throughout the region served by their campus.

Teach for America

Teach for America (TFA) is a national corps of recent college graduates from all academic majors who commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools. Its mission is “to build the movement to eliminate educational inequity by enlisting our nation’s most promising future leaders in the effort.” TFA places corps members in regions most profoundly impacted by the gap in educational outcomes. More than 80 percent of the students that corps members reach qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and 95 percent of the students are African-American or Latino. All of the districts in which TFA members serve are classified as “high-need” local education agencies by the federal government.

Corps members are paid directly by the school districts for which they work and generally receive the same salaries and health benefits as their district peers. Corps members earn between \$28,000 and \$44,000 per year at urban sites and between \$25,000 and \$33,000 at rural sites. Teach for America is currently a member of AmeriCorps. As such, corps members are eligible to receive loan forbearance and interest payment on qualified student loans during their two years of service. They are also eligible to receive an education award of \$4,725 at the end of each year-of-service (a total of \$9,450 over the two years), which may be used toward future educational expenses or to repay qualified student loans.

Peace Corps

Established in 1961 by President Robert F. Kennedy, the Peace Corps is a two-year direct service program which places its volunteers in different countries around the world to help address global needs. Peace Corps members work in the following areas: education, youth outreach, and community development; business development; agriculture and environment; health and HIV/AIDS; and information technology. Within these areas, the specific duties and responsibilities of each member can vary widely. There is no one Peace Corps experience.

The Peace Corps requires a 28-month, full-time commitment and intensive language training. The ages of Peace Corps volunteers range from 18 to 65.

Corp members are paid a living wage, qualify for student loan deferment, and receive health benefits and vacation time through the program. Returned Peace Corps volunteers are eligible to receive financial assistance to pursue graduate studies in a variety of subject areas through the Fellows/USA program.

V. Track #4 --Philosophy Graduate School

The final track is going to graduate school in philosophy. Several comments should be made about this track. First, in order to have a reasonable chance of getting a full-time job teaching philosophy at a college or university, one must go to one of the top twenty to thirty graduate schools in philosophy. And, even after graduating from one of these universities, your prospects of getting a job in philosophy are not great. This means that one needs to be to be a top student in philosophy, and do very well in graduate school. Even if one does not plan teaching philosophy, however, one might still go to graduate school for one's own enrichment – such as further skill development. In this case, getting into a top school is not critical.

Second, most graduate programs offer at least tuition remission; many offer teaching assistantships or fellowships that also cover living expenses (if one can live on beans and potatoes!) You should be very reluctant to go to a graduate program that you must pay a significant amount of money to attend – student loans can really be a burden once one gets out of school. Sometimes less ranked programs offer better financial aid packages since they are trying to attract students. If you are serious about becoming a philosophy professor, it is not a good idea to plan on graduating from a school that has a ranking too much lower just for the additional financial aid since it can significantly decrease your chances of finding a teaching job. You might opt, however, to go there for one or two years to get further philosophy training.

Two other comments: (1) one should only go to graduate school if one really wants to study philosophy; (2) if possible, you should visit the school you are interested in and arrange to talk to other graduate students. Many schools sound good on paper but the graduate students are generally unhappy or the place will not suit your personality. Talking to graduate students will help you both find out more about the program, but also to get a sense if the kind of graduate students in the program are the kind of people you will “click” with.

Preparing for Graduate School

There are several crucial things you need to do ahead of time to prepare for graduate school.

(1) Go to the Oxford Program in Philosophy in junior year and do as well as possible. Since everyone knows of Oxford, and its prestige, high grades from Oxford will look really good on your transcript. Almost all of your grades will be based on papers. As much as possible, study material related to the course you are taking months before you arrive. For those courses requiring a term paper, you might want to even choose a topic ahead of time and begin work on it. This will give you a major head start in writing a quality paper. Pass your paper by others, such as friends and professors at Messiah, for critique, even when you are at Oxford.

(2) Practice and take GRE; if necessary, take it again to improve your score. The GRE often determines the first cut for those who the admission and financial aid committees (e.g., scholarship, fellowship, and teaching assistantships committees). The reason is that faculty are often overloaded with applicants, and so they must immediately narrow down the pool in the easiest way possible. And that easiest way is looking at a standardized test score. It is especially important if you do not have a stellar GPA, since it can show you have the intellectual ability but for some reason (e.g., illness) did not realize the potential.

(3) Do as well as possible in college, especially your philosophy classes; and if possible, study beyond the minimum requirements in philosophy. Although our philosophy courses are sufficient to enter any graduate program, you will get a head start if you take more than the 36 credit hour minimum.

(4) Many philosophy graduate schools ask for a writing sample. Insofar as these writing samples are read, they will generally help determine the final set of candidates admitted or given financial aid. By the end of your junior year, begin working on a writing sample: a topic that you are interested in and that you think that you can write, or already have written, a great essay on. This can then be used as the basis of your senior research paper in philosophy seminar, where you can further refine your ideas. One final note: the papers are read by professors from many different fields of philosophy, so attempt to make it clear and accessible to a wide range of professional philosophers.

(5) Many graduate programs ask for a personal essay. This is likely to be read before the writing sample, since one can quickly read through it. Start this one or two months ahead of time, send it to others for critique, and then refine it.

(6) Apply to summer programs in philosophy.

(7) Submit a qualified paper to an undergraduate or graduate journal, or undergraduate conference.

(8) Send your graduate applications off sufficiently ahead of time (e.g., two or three weeks) that your letter writers can get the letter to the school. Also, do not depend on all letters being submitted electronically. Some still require the regular mail which means you must build in more time. And do not just assume you will be able to get a hold of your letter writer at the last minute. You need to give them sufficient advance notice – at least a week.

(9) Finally, apply to many programs. The top ten to fifteen programs are very hard to get into. If you are not in the top 10% of philosophy majors here at Messiah, you are unlikely to get into any of these. For many who have not excelled at Messiah or entered philosophy late, often the best option is often to go to a “stepping stone school” (e.g., a Master’s program), and after taking courses there, apply to a good graduate program. Two programs that we have sent many students to are the program at Western Michigan University at Kalamazoo and Northern Illinois University at DeKalb. Make sure to look up the deadlines for applications in the early fall of your senior year.