

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

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Mailing Address

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Department of Philosophy
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Department Chair:

Bruce Bubacz

Professors Emeriti:

Henry R. Frankel, George D. Gale, Jr., Edward Walter

Professors:

Bruce Bubacz, Clancy Martin, Wayne Vaught

Associate Professor:

James Sheppard

Assistant Professor:

Gwen Nally

Associate Teaching Professor:

Adrian Switzer

Undergraduate Advisor:

James Sheppard

Department Description

The Department of Philosophy offers a program of study leading to the bachelor of arts degree in philosophy. Courses are offered that develop critical and analytical skills, acquaint students with the history of philosophy and apply philosophy to issues of living.

Students who major in other disciplines can gain special insight into their majors with a philosophy minor. There is a focused minor on bioethics, targeted at students interested in the medical and health care professions.

Career Implications of the Degree

The dynamism of American economic life guarantees that change will be a constant, especially in employment – most people will change careers several times during their working lives. How can you prepare yourself for the inevitable challenges of your career? The most important traits that will serve you well in the twenty-first century are flexibility and discipline, the capacity to quickly assess and understand new environments, to recognize opportunities and the ability to deploy tools that will guarantee success. The study of philosophy will prepare you for the challenges of this evolving world. Studying philosophy provides you with the ability to read complex materials with care and comprehension, to write with clarity and economy and to express your ideas forcefully and succinctly. If you are interested in honing the skills that will allow you to succeed in any endeavor requiring focused thought, if you recognize that the best way to prepare for the challenging world of our knowledge-based economy is to hone your mind and sharpen your intellect, then philosophy is the major for you.

Advising System

Although all faculty members of the department are available for student advising, the department has an undergraduate advisor to whom questions about the philosophy program should be directed.

Special Services

The Philosophy Department is committed to having a strong student community, and has a very active Honors Society, Phi Sigma Tau. Events include everything from inviting guest speakers, movie nights, reading/discussion groups (both with and without faculty members) to socializing, and are open to anyone interested in philosophy. Students are highly encouraged to be active participants in both Phi Sigma Tau and departmental life in general.

Scholarly Presentations

Many visiting philosophers present scholarly papers to the Philosophy Department during the academic year. In addition, organizations such as the Kansas City Area Philosophical Association, the Central States Philosophical Association and other professional societies occasionally meet in Kansas City. Students are cordially invited to attend these activities.

Faculty

Bruce Bubacz Contact Information (<https://cf1.umkc.edu/intapps/lookup/?LastName=bubacz>); chair, department of philosophy; curators' professor of philosophy and professor of law; B.A. (Ripon College); M.S., Ph.D. (University of Washington-Seattle).

Clancy W. Martin^{1,2} Contact Information (<https://cf1.umkc.edu/intapps/lookup/?LastName=martin>); professor of philosophy; B.A. (Baylor University); Ph.D. (University of Texas at Austin).

Gwen Nally Contact Information (<https://cf1.umkc.edu/intapps/lookup/?LastName=Nally>); assistant professor of philosophy; B.A. (James Madison University); M.A., Ph.D. (University of Virginia).

James Sheppard^{1,2} Contact Information (<https://cf1.umkc.edu/intapps/lookup/?LastName=sheppard>); associate professor of philosophy; B.A. (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire); M.A. (Michigan State University); Ph.D. (Binghamton University).

Adrian Switzer Contact Information (<https://cf1.umkc.edu/intapps/lookup/?LastName=Switzer>); associate teaching professor of philosophy; B.A. (Lehigh University); M.A., Ph.D. (Loyola University Chicago).

Wayne Vaught^{1,2} Contact Information (<https://cf1.umkc.edu/intapps/lookup/?LastName=vaught>); Dean of Arts & Sciences and professor of philosophy and professor of medicine; B.A. (Georgetown College); M.A. (Baylor University); Ph.D. (University of Tennessee).

¹ Members of UMKC Graduate Faculty

² Members of UMKC Doctoral Faculty

Undergraduate Undergraduate Degrees:

- Bachelor of Arts: Philosophy (<http://catalog.umkc.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/academic-departments-programs/philosophy/bachelor-of-arts-philosophy>)
- Minor in Philosophy (<http://catalog.umkc.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/academic-departments-programs/philosophy/minor-philosophy>)
- Minor in Bioethics and Medical Humanities (<http://catalog.umkc.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/academic-departments-programs/philosophy/minor-bioethics-medical-humanities>)

Courses

PHILOS 210 Introduction to Philosophy Credits: 3

An introduction to many of the central problems of philosophy. The various dimensions of philosophy are examined as it related to our relationships with each other, our understanding of our world and our understanding of ourselves. Connections between classical philosophers and contemporary issues are explored as philosophy is considered as a deeply personal and also as a social phenomenon.

PHILOS 210 - MOTR PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy



PHILOS 221 Contemporary Moral Issues Credits: 3

This course offers a philosophical examination of ethical issues in contemporary society. Topics for discussion include ethical conflicts arising in business and technology, engineering, healthcare, politics, and the environment. Moral concerns addressed may include reproductive rights and technologies, warfare, capital punishment, pornography, privacy, consumerism, euthanasia, sexuality, and animal welfare.

PHILOS 221 - MOTR PHIL 102: Introduction to Ethics



PHILOS 222 Foundations Of Logic and Scientific Reasoning Credits: 3

This course introduces the basic concepts and methods of modern logic, beginning with premise, inference, conclusion, and argument, with emphasis on understanding and reconstructing complex patterns of reasoning, and analysis and construction of valid arguments.

PHILOS 222 - MOTR PHIL 101: Introduction to Logic**PHILOS 250 Special Readings In Philosophy Credits: 3**

An investigation of readings on a topic, a philosophical movement, or a philosopher to be selected by the instructor. The course is designed to meet the needs of students who are interested in a specific issue or person in philosophy but do not yet possess the necessary background and skill demanded of those who have taken work beyond the introductory course (s) in philosophy.

PHILOS 250A Special Readings In Philosophy Credits: 3**PHILOS 310WI Ancient Philosophy Credits: 3**

A survey of the central figures of classical philosophy: the pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans and other philosophers of antiquity. The contributions of major philosophers to the development of science, religion, and social and political theories are studied.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222, RooWriter.

PHILOS 320WI History of Modern Philosophy Credits: 3

A survey of the central figures of modern philosophy: Rene Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, G.W. Leibniz, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume and Immanuel Kant. In addition to the philosophical issues of the period, cultural, historical and political matters are considered. A secondary goal is the establishment of the pedigree of contemporary philosophical problems.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222, RooWriter.

PHILOS 321 Ethics Credits: 3

Attention is given to the nature of ethical ideas and the development and history of ethical theory.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210, or PHILOS 221, or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 322 Philosophy of Literature Credits: 3

A close study of the ancient problems at the intersection of philosophy and literature: what sort of truth, if any, do we find in literature? Does literature have ethical content? What makes a literary text beautiful? How do "literary" texts differ from philosophical and other kinds of texts? Should literary texts influence our thinking about politics and other social issues? We will study classic philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche, great literary writers such as Sappho, Dante, Goethe, Dostoevsky, and Rilke, and harder to categorize figures like Freud. The class will include the study of several recent philosophers who worked specifically on the subject of the "philosophy of literature," such as Bakhtin, Benjamin, Lacan, Szondi.

PHILOS 325 Aesthetics Credits: 3

The basic problems of aesthetics are examined, with special emphasis on the character of the work of art, the aesthetic response of the viewer, the creative process of the artist, and the nature of aesthetic criticism. These topics are discussed in light of conflicting aesthetic theories.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 329 American Philosophy Credits: 3

The main trends of American thought are covered, with special emphasis on the philosophies of Peirce, James and Dewey.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 332 Existentialism Credits: 3

A study of the development of existentialism. Selections from the works of such thinkers as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Heidegger, Camus and other related philosophers are considered. Special attention is devoted to the existential movements in literature, social science and medicine.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 333 Social And Political Philosophy Credits: 3

A consideration of representative views of the place of man in contemporary society. Contributions in psychology, political theory, economics, sociology and anthropology are investigated philosophically with a view toward offering a critical appraisal of the nature of man in the human community.

PHILOS 335 Philosophy Of Mind Credits: 3

A study of problems arising in connection with such topics as mental phenomena, the relation of mind to body, free will and determinism, the self and personal identity, and 'thinking' machines. Classical and contemporary treatments of such concepts as 'mind', 'intention', 'sensation', 'perception', 'stimulus', etc., and their relation to action and behavior are considered.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 337 Philosophy Of History Credits: 3

A discussion of methodological and substantive issues, including the nature of historical explanation, whether history can be a science, and various theories of history such as those of Vico, Hegel, Marx, and Collingwood.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 340 Philosophy Of Law Credits: 3

An analysis of major philosophies of law, including methods of justifying legal systems through natural law, legal positivism, sociological jurisprudence, theology, etc. Contemporary legal theories are critically analyzed.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 370 Environmental Ethics And Policy Credits: 3

Various philosophical approaches to issues such as the value of nature, human obligations to non-human animals, species, ecosystems and future generations; environmental justice; restoration; resource use; environmental politics; and the relation between environmental issues, policy and ethics will be discussed critically.

PHILOS 430 Plato Credits: 3

Selected dialogues of Plato are studied with a view to understanding Plato's philosophy and its position in the world of Greece and antiquity. Plato's philosophy is also examined with reference to his place in the Western tradition and in modern philosophy.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210, PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 431 Aristotle Credits: 3

Selected portions of Aristotle's works on logic, metaphysics, science, ethics, politics, and poetics are studied with a view to understanding Aristotle's philosophy and its position in the world of Greece and antiquity. Aristotle's philosophy is examined with reference to its place in the Western tradition and in modern philosophy.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 436 Kant Credits: 3

A study of selected writings of Immanuel Kant, with particular emphasis on the epistemological, metaphysical and ethical aspects of Kant's philosophy; an examination of Kant's significance within contemporary thought.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 445 20Th-Century Philosophy Credits: 3

A study of the development of philosophy in the 20th-Century, treating such movements as Idealism, Realism, Logical Positivism, Existentialism, Phenomenology, Pragmatism, and Analytic Philosophy.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 448 Recent Ethical Theories Credits: 3

An analysis and investigation of modern and contemporary ethical theories. Among the theories considered are ethical relativity, the emotive theory, utilitarianism, neo Kantianism, and situation ethics.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 321.

PHILOS 451 History and Philosophy of Bioethics Credits: 3

This course will provide an overview of the history of medicine and bioethics from antiquity to the present. In addition to key historical events, the course will provide an overview of foundational ethical theories. The course will explore key events in bioethics and the responses to them in the bioethics literature.

PHILOS 452 Healthcare Law and Policy Credits: 3

This course will focus on basic issues in healthcare law and public policy. Issues such as confidentiality, informed consent, healthcare financing, and end-of-life decision making will be covered. In addition to key historical events, the course will provide an overview of foundational ethical theories. The course will explore key events in bioethics and the responses to them in the bioethics literature.

PHILOS 453 Clinical Ethics and Case Consultation Credits: 3

This course will focus on classic cases in bioethics and will expose students to contemporary trends in healthcare ethics consultation.

PHILOS 480 Selected Topics Credits: 1-3

Each time this course is offered a particular philosopher or particular area of philosophy will be the topic of discussion. The course may be repeated for credit when the topic varies.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210 or PHILOS 222.

PHILOS 480A Selected Topics Credits: 1-3

PHILOS 480B Selected Topics Credits: 1-3

PHILOS 480E Selected Topics Credits: 1-3

PHILOS 490 Special Topics And Readings Credits: 1-3

Intensive reading and/or research in an area selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. May be repeated for credit when the topic varies.

Prerequisites: Departmental consent.

PHILOS 490B Special Topics And Readings Credits: 1-3

Intensive reading and/or research in an area selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. By permission only. May be repeated for credit when the topic varies.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 222, PHILOS 310WI, PHILOS 320WI, PHILOS 321.

PHILOS 490F Special Topics and Readings Credits: 1-3

Intensive reading and/or research in an area selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. By permission only. May be repeated for credit when the topic varies.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 222, PHILOS 310WI, PHILOS 320WI, PHILOS 321.

PHILOS 5521 Managerial And Administrative Decision Making And Ethical Values Credits: 3

Methods of problem definition and decision making in ethics are presented with the goal of providing the student with a matrix for case review. A series of cases is offered that serve to integrate approaches to ethical reflection with management and administrative decision making. Cases are chosen on the basis of topical, curricular and conceptual relevance.

PHILOS 5540 Seminar On Philosophy And Law Credits: 2

An examination from a philosophical perspective of the historical and conceptual relationships present in the evolution, development and analysis of law. Among the systems of analysis examined will be natural law theory, legal positivism and legal realism. Ordinarily the seminar will focus on a specific area of controversy in the law.

PHILOS 5546 Ethics And Government Credits: 3

An examination of ethical issues related to government, with the primary focus on national and local governmental bodies in the United States. Ethics in the executive, legislative and judicial branches are examined. Ethical standards for elected officials and appointed public servants are reviewed. Attempts to "legislate morality" are considered. The course includes a historical review of ethics and government and an analysis of the legal implications of legislation regarding ethics in the executive branch.

PHILOS 5550 History and Philosophy of Bioethics Credits: 3

This course will provide an overview of the history of medicine and bioethics from antiquity to the present. In addition to key historical events, the course will provide an overview of foundational ethical theories. The course will explore key events in bioethics and the responses to them in the bioethics literature.

PHILOS 5551 Healthcare Law and Policy Credits: 3

This course will focus on basic issues in healthcare law and public policy. Issues such as confidentiality, informed consent, healthcare financing, and end-of-life decision making will be covered. In addition to key historical events, the course will provide an overview of foundational ethical theories. The course will explore key events in bioethics and the responses to them in the bioethics literature.

PHILOS 5552 Clinical Ethics and Case Consultation Credits: 3

This course will focus on classic cases in bioethics and will expose students to contemporary trends in healthcare ethics consultation.

PHILOS 5620 Descartes To Hume Credits: 3**PHILOS 5625 Aesthetics Credits: 3****PHILOS 5638 Philosophy Of Biology Credits: 3****PHILOS 5640 Philosophy Of Law Credits: 3****PHILOS 5690 Research In Selected Fields: Graduate Studies Credits: 3**

Intensive research in an area selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. By permission only. May be repeated for credit when the topic varies.

PHILOS H310 Ancient Philosophy - Honors Credits: 3**PHILOS H321 Honors: Introduction To Ethics Credits: 3****PHILOS H332 Existentialism Credits: 3**

A study of the development of existentialism. Selections from the works of such thinkers as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Heidegger, Camus and other related philosophers are considered. Special attention is devoted to the existential movements in literature, social science and medicine.

Prerequisites: PHILOS 210, PHILOS 222.

PHILOS H333 Social And Political Philosophy Credits: 3

A consideration of representative views of the place of man in contemporary society. Contributions in psychology, political theory, economics, sociology and anthropology are investigated philosophically with a view toward offering a critical appraisal of the nature of man in the human community. No prerequisites.

PHILOS H370 Environmental Ethics And Policy Credits: 3

Various philosophical approaches to issues such as the value of nature, human obligations to non-human animals, species, ecosystems and future generations; environmental justice; restoration; resource use; environmental politics; and the relation between environmental issues, policy and ethics will be discussed critically.