

Majoring in Philosophy at Simmons

The Department of Philosophy welcomes your interest in our undergraduate program. This information is designed to supplement the College's general Catalogue. Please consult the Catalogue for more information.

If you have questions about this program, please don't hesitate to contact us through our administrative assistant (617-521-2220) or by emailing the department chair (see website).

THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY

Unlike most disciplines studied in a university, philosophy is usually unknown to the entering college student. Although high school students are intellectually capable of studying philosophy, the curriculum seldom provides them with the opportunity to do so. Furthermore, the impressions students often pick up about philosophy are apt to be distorted: philosophy is sometimes confused with religion, with psychology, and with mystical experience. Thus, the undergraduate student is commonly uninformed or misinformed about the nature of philosophy to an extent that is not the case with other academic subjects.

Yet, philosophy is one of the most important subjects a student can study. A student who graduates from college without taking a course in philosophy has been deprived of a valuable part of her intellectual heritage. Because philosophy emphasizes reasoning, thinking, seeing the big picture, and looking at different points of view, training in philosophy is never dated.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

The Philosophy major, regardless of whether it is to be single or double, requires 32 semester hours (eight courses). All majors take Philosophy 122 (Critical Thinking) or Philosophy 123 (Symbolic Logic), at least two courses in the history of philosophy (Philosophy 241, 242, 243, 244, 245), and the seminar, Philosophy 390, which may be taken more than once.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHILOSOPHY MINOR

The Philosophy minor requires 20 semester hours (five courses). All minors must take Philosophy 122 (Critical Thinking) or Philosophy 123 (Symbolic Logic), at least one course in the history of philosophy (Philosophy 241, 242, 243, 244, 245), and three other courses in philosophy.

Philosophy? What Can You Do With That?

Students thinking about majoring in philosophy hear this question routinely from friends and family. If you are drawn to philosophy, you can rest assured that the major will prepare

you for more than just graduate school in philosophy. In addition to its intrinsic pleasures, studying philosophy prepares you for a broad range of careers. Consider the following:

Majoring in philosophy is practical.

The philosophy major provides a true education, rather than mere training. Employers today seek smart people who are able think critically and respond positively to changes and problems. More so than perhaps any other major, philosophy teaches skills and abilities that are practical and applicable to any career. These never go out of style:

- The ability to think logically.
- The ability to analyze and solve problems.
- The ability to assess the pros and cons of proposed solutions.
- The ability to write and speak clearly.
- The ability to persuade.
- The ability to conduct thorough research.
- The ability to ask the right questions.
- The ability to think creatively and imaginatively.

The philosophy major prepares you well for graduate education in a broad range of fields.

A Career in Law

According to data from the Law School Admission Council (unpublished, 1999) there were 71,726 applicants to at least one of the American Bar Association (ABA) approved law schools nationwide for the application year of 1997-8. Their average Law School Admission Test (LSAT) score was 151.4 and 70.1% of them were admitted to at least one law school.

Below are the figures for the five majors with the largest volume of applicants for that year.

Major	# of Applicants	Average LSAT score	Rate of Admission
Political Science	12,737	151.4	73.5%
History	4,988	154.1	80.1%
English	4,854	153.8	78.4%
Psychology	4,062	151.8	73.8%
Criminal Justice	3,283	145.0	56.7%

Compare the numbers above with those of philosophy majors below.

Philosophy	1,570	156.9	82.4%
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Careers in Business

The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), the administrators of the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), in their latest Five-Year Summary (1992-1997), provide the following data for the 1996-97 year.

Major	Number of Test-takers	Mean Score
Physics	1391	587
Mathematics	3031	573

Engineering	32474	564
Philosophy	709	560
History	3261	556
Chemistry	2513	549
Economics	17405	546
Biological Sciences	6034	545
English	4854	537
Computer Science	5843	537
Political Science	6496	525
Foreign Language	2709	524
Statistics	674	524
Psychology	4643	514
Finance	20197	514
Architecture	1050	512
Accounting	27591	500
Fine Arts	1202	497
Sociology	1820	493
Education	1437	471
Management	21165	471
Marketing	15151	469

Careers in Medicine

If you want to pursue a career in medicine, you should know that majoring in philosophy, along with taking the necessary pre-med courses, is excellent preparation. In fact, many medical schools look very favorably on a major in the humanities as long as the requisite science courses are taken as well. Indeed, Philosophy majors actually have a significantly higher medical school acceptance rate than biology or chemistry majors. No statistics concerning the scores of philosophy majors on the MCAT are available.

Careers in Technology

Philosophical skills are always welcome in the world of high technology. While specific technical knowledge becomes quickly obsolete, philosophical skills are needed in every technical area. Philosophy majors develop the ability to take vaguely formulated problems and find precise ways to deal with them. Philosophers have played major roles in fields such as artificial intelligence and computational linguistics.

Advanced Degrees in Philosophy or Other Humanities Areas

According to data from Educational Testing Service (ETS), the administrators of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), philosophy majors did better between October 1, 1994 and September 30, 1997 on the combined GRE score than students with every other major except physics & astronomy and the mathematical sciences. The following table indicates the average scores for students in 27 majors. (Refer to the ETS site and search for 'test percentage distribution' for the complete tables.)

	Analytical	Verbal	Quantitative	Combined Score
Physics & Astronomy	648	537	717	1902
Mathematical Science	636	499	700	1835
Philosophy	630	582	599	1811

Economics	618	504	673	1795
Chemistry	611	498	655	1764
Computer & Info Sciences	605	482	675	1762
Engineering	596	471	691	1758
Linguistics	593	535	590	1718
Earth, Atmosphere, Marine	595	504	605	1704
Biological Sciences	593	498	597	1688
Religious Studies	587	547	551	1685
English Lang & Lit	584	555	526	1665
Banking and Finance	577	464	621	1662
History	585	542	532	1659
Anthropology & Arch	584	534	536	1654
Political Science	580	513	552	1645
Art History	577	532	528	1637
Foreign Lang & Lit	559	517	536	1612
Natural Sciences	559	465	547	1571
Psychology	550	472	514	1536
Sociology	540	477	506	1523
Health & Medical Sci	541	448	520	1509
Communications	535	466	504	1505
Education	533	446	503	1482
Business Admin & Mgmt	523	436	521	1480
Accounting	521	414	531	1466
Home Econ	511	428	467	1406

All of this is good news for those who want to study philosophy. The major provides an education that is as practical as it is fulfilling. The largest study conducted to date, a study by the National Institute of Education, Standardized Test Scores of College Graduates, 1964-1982 showed that during the 18-year period of the study:

- Students majoring in philosophy received scores substantially higher (5% better or more) than the average on each of the tests studied.
- Philosophy major's scores on several tests exceeded those of students majoring in other humanities areas, in the social sciences, and in several of the natural sciences.

The study (1986), whose results are summarized in the table below, compared the scores of 550,000 U.S. citizens who took the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT), and the verbal and quantitative portions of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) in 1981-82 with the corresponding data for earlier years. The report's author, Clifford Adelman, told the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that one of the most significant results found was that students who major in "applied" fields such as business administration, education, social work, and journalism "consistently underperform" arts and science majors.

The performance of philosophy majors on all four tests was remarkable:

On the LSAT

- Philosophy majors made higher scores than did students in any other humanities area.
- Philosophy majors made higher scores than all social and natural science majors except economics and mathematics.
- Philosophy majors made higher scores than all "applied" majors.
- Philosophy majors scored 10% better than political science majors--a popular choice of students planning to study law--on the LSAT.
- Philosophy majors scored 5.3% better on the LSAT than accounting majors--another popular pre-law choice.

On the GMAT

- Philosophy majors outperformed business majors by a margin of about 15%.
- Philosophy majors outperformed every other undergraduate major except mathematics.

On the GRE

- Philosophy majors' scores on the verbal portion of the GRE were higher than in any other major, even English.
- Philosophy majors scored substantially higher than did all other humanities majors.
- Philosophy majors were alone among humanities majors in scoring above the overall average.
- Philosophy majors were alone among humanities majors in scoring above the overall average on the quantitative portion of the GRE.

Full report may be obtained through ERIC Document
Reproduction Service, 1-800-LET-ERIC (1-800-538-3742).

The Proof is in the Pudding!

OK. So where are all these successful philosophy majors now? Take a look!

FORMER PHILOSOPHY MAJORS

PERFORMERS

Harrison Ford--Actor
Chris Hardwick--MTV Host
Amy Madigan--Actress
Steve Martin--Comedian, Actor
Dennis Miller--Comedian
Stone Phillips--News Broadcaster
Brad Roberts--Crash Test Dummies
Susan Sarandon--Actress
Gene Siskel--Movie Critic
Jeff Smith--Frugal Gourmet
Steve Thomas--TV Host, This Old House
Alex Trebek--TV Host, Jeopardy

BUSINESS

Carl Icahn--CEO, TWA Airlines
Gerald Levin--CEO, Time-Warner, Inc.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Gertrude Himmelfarb--Historian
Herbert Simon--Economist, Artificial
Intelligence and Nobel Laureate
C. Vann Woodward--Historian

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Jules Debray--Writer and Government
Official, France
Rahm Emanuel--Clinton White House
Political Advisor
Thomas Jefferson--U.S. President
Aung San Suu Kyi--Human Rights Activist,
Nobel Peace Prize Winner

ARTS AND LETTERS

Joseph Chaikin--Theatre Director
Ethan Coen--Film Maker
Umberto Eco--Novelist and Semiologist
Ken Follett--British Writer
Michael Frayn--Novelist
Northrup Frye--Literary Critic

Martin Gardner--Essayist
Philip Glass--Composer
Rebecca Goldstein--Novelist
Claude Lanzmann--Film Maker
Ira Levin--Writer
James Michener--Writer
Iris Murdoch--Novelist
Steve Reich--Composer
Meyer Schapiro--Art Critic
Alexander Solzhenitsin--Writer
Wallace Shawn--Playwright and Actor
Susan Sontag--Writer
David Foster Wallace--Novelist

Elie Wiesel--Writer

SPORTS

Phil Jackson--Coach, Chicago Bulls
Michael McKaskey--Owner, Chicago Bears
Aaron Taylor--Offensive Tackle, Green Bay Packers

RELIGION

Joseph Bernardin--Cardinal, Chicago
Mircea Eliade--Religious Studies
Madelyn Murray O'Hair—Famous Atheist

Oil–Rich Norway Hires Philosopher As Moral Compass

The list continues to grow. On December 1, 2005, the Wall Street Journal announced that Henrik Syse, a professional philosopher, started work as the in-house ethicist for the Norwegian government's Petroleum Fund, one of the world's largest pools of investment capital. Syse is putting his philosophical background together with his strong analytical skills to make a major contribution to settling ethical issues ranging from executive pay to pollution to labor issues. You could do the same!

Even better, here is what some Simmons Philosophy Majors have gone on to do after graduating....

- Cornell, Masters Program in Public Policy
- Simmons, Masters Program in Gender/Culture Studies
- Simmons, School of Social Work
- Baltimore Hebrew University, Masters Program in Hebraic Studies
- New School, Masters Program in Philosophy
- University of Maine, Portland, Law School
- Tufts University, Masters Program in Philosophy
- University of California, Davis, Ph.D. Program in Computer Science
- Maine's People Alliance, Director of Field Organizations
- Gillette
- Tufts University, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
- New England School of Law
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
- New York University, Masters in Public Policy
- Thomas Crowley Law School
- University of Connecticut Law School
- Peace Corps

Simmons In-House Career Resources

Philosophy Handbook

The Career Education Center at Simmons provides workshops and specialists to help students pursue their professional goals. For more information about services offered, go to their website, call 617-521-2488, or visit them in P304. In addition to a fantastic physical library, the Career Education Center also maintains an online resource library at <http://my.simmons.edu/libraries/collections/career/>.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING & THE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

Simmons requires a minimum of 8 semester hours of independent learning of all students. Because this work is done at an advanced level, students often satisfy this requirement in the area of their major. Independent learning emphasizes student initiative, planning, and implementation on a contractual basis with a faculty member. The student must assume the primary responsibility in this experience. She must choose a topic appropriate to her goals, define the problem, and carry out the work of the project. It is the joint responsibility of the student and her faculty sponsor to monitor the progress made in completing the project and to evaluate the experience.

In the Philosophy Department, the independent learning requirement can be met in the following ways:

PHIL 350-1,2 Independent Study
PHIL 355-1,2 Senior Thesis
PHIL 370-1,2 Internship in Philosophy
PHIL 390-2 Seminar

The Seminar in philosophy is shared among the faculty in the department, with different topics each year. This seminar is a careful examination of a problem in philosophy (e.g., free will vs. determinism), a particular philosopher's perspective (e.g., Foucault), or a sub field in philosophy (e.g., Feminist Ethics).

PHILOSOPHY 350: INDEPENDENT STUDY

Normally, students engage in independent study for one semester for four credit hours. Independent study will be conducted and evaluated according to the following guidelines:

1. The semester before they start their independent study, interested students should identify a Simmons philosophy professor who agrees to serve as their independent study

advisor. Prior to registering for independent study, students must provide that professor with a proposal containing the following information:

- A brief (1-2 page) background description of the topic area.
- A preliminary annotated bibliography. Annotations should describe the relevance of each citation to the topic area.
- A preliminary outline of the independent study topics.
- A preliminary timeline for the project.

Following approval of the proposal by the independent study advisor, students may register for the agreed upon number of credit hours of independent study.

2. During the semester, students will meet regularly – normally bi-weekly – for discussion with their independent study advisor.

3. Writing will be arranged jointly by the student and her thesis advisor. Normally, students will write a 20-25 page paper.

4. Each independent study student will give a presentation on her work and at the Philosophy Department's "Independent Learning Symposium."

6. The independent study and its presentation to faculty and students will be evaluated by the independent study advisor according to the following criteria:

- Clarity
- Focus
- Quality of critical, philosophical reflections on issues
- Overall performance of independent work.

Note: Independent Study work is part of the Simmons College Independent Learning Requirement. It is the student's responsibility to see that all of the guidelines for the conduct of the independent study are followed.

Simmons Independent Study Examples From Recent Years

- "Civil Liberties Post 9/11."
- "Karl Marx's Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts."
- "A Materialist Feminist Analysis of Surrogacy."
- "The Problem of Universals in Indian Philosophy: A Comparative Essay on Nyaya Realism and Buddhist Nominalism."
- "Wittgenstein and the Rabbis of the Babylonian Talmud: A Drawing of Parallels."
- "Heidegger's and Foucault's Conceptions of Language."
- "Schopenhauer on Will and Intellect."

PHILOSOPHY 355: SENIOR THESIS

Students may engage in thesis work for one or two semesters, and for four to eight credit hours in any one semester. Normally, thesis work will be conducted and evaluated according to the following guidelines:

1. The semester before they start their theses, interested students should identify a Simmons philosophy professor who agrees to serve as their thesis advisor. Prior to registering for thesis work, students must provide that professor with a proposal containing the following information:

- A brief (1-2 page) background description of the topic area.
- A clear, concise statement of the question to be addressed by the thesis.
- A preliminary annotated bibliography. Annotations should describe the relevance of each citation to the thesis question.
- A preliminary outline of the thesis topics.
- A preliminary timeline for the project, noting deadlines for completion of research and writing. The timeline should be coordinated with the outline.

Following approval of the proposal by the thesis advisor, students may register for the agreed upon number of credit hours of thesis work.

2. During the semester, students will meet regularly – normally bi-weekly – for discussion with their thesis advisor.

3. The thesis will be submitted in triplicate to the Philosophy Department on a date to be arranged jointly by the student and her thesis advisor. Theses are normally in the range of 60 - 80 pages.

4. Each thesis student will give a presentation and defense of her thesis to the Philosophy Department faculty on a mutually agreed upon day and time.

5. Each thesis student will give a presentation of her thesis and its philosophical relevance at the Philosophy Department's "Independent Learning Symposium."

6. The thesis, its defense, and its presentation to faculty and students will be evaluated by the thesis advisor according to the following criteria:

- Clarity
- Focus
- Quality of critical, philosophical reflections on issues
- Overall performance of independent work.

Note: Thesis work is part of the Simmons College Independent Learning Requirement. It is the student's responsibility to see that all of the guidelines for the conduct of the thesis are followed.

Simmons Senior Thesis Examples From Recent Years:

- “John Rawls.”
- “Ethical Leadership.”
- “Transcending the Individual: Determinism and the Interconnected Self.”
- “Manic Depression through Many Lenses; Parallels Between Ancient and Contemporary Views of Emotion and Mental Disorder.”
- “Ambiguity on the Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir.”
- “Jewish Influences in Levinas’ Thought.”
- “Immigration Policy Post 9/11.”
- “Communication in a Practical Light.”
- “Philosophical Counseling.”
- “Albert Camus’ Notion of Individuality.”

PHILOSOPHY 370: INTERNSHIPS

Normally, internships will be conducted and evaluated according to the following guidelines:

1. The semester before they start their internships, interested students must identify a Simmons philosophy professor who agrees to serve as their internship advisor. Students should provide that professor with a preliminary data sheet containing the following information:
 - A description of the purpose of the internship, including its philosophical relevance, your job title and a detailed description of the work to be performed, including total work hours per week.
 - Supervisor’s name, title, address, and phone number and email address.
2. Prior to the start of the internship, students should complete the Supervisor Agreement Form (included at the end of this Handbook) and bring a signed copy to their Simmons advisor.
3. During the semester of the internship, students will normally complete a weekly 1-2 page e-mail report on incidents and issues encountered at work.
 - Evaluation criteria:
 - Regularity
 - Quality of critical, philosophical reflections.

4. Normally, students will write a paper focusing on philosophical issues related to their internship. Students should schedule a mid-semester meeting with their Simmons advisor to discuss their final paper topic.
5. One week after the mid-semester meeting, students should hand to their Simmons advisor a proposal for their final paper. The proposal should be 2 pages, typed
6. Students will write a 10-12 page paper, due the final day of classes.
7. Each internship student will give a presentation on her internship and its philosophical relevance at the Philosophy Department's "Independent Learning Symposium."
8. The internship, paper, and presentation to faculty and students will be evaluated by the internship advisor according to the following criteria:
 - Clarity
 - Focus
 - Quality of critical, philosophical reflections on issues
 - Overall performance of independent work.
9. Students are responsible for soliciting and monitoring the receipt of a final letter of evaluation from their internship supervisor. A form for this letter is included at the end of this Handbook. The supervisor evaluation will be included in the final evaluation of the internship.

Note: Internships are part of the Simmons College Independent Learning Requirement. It is the student's responsibility to see that all of the guidelines for the conduct of the internship are followed.

Internship Examples From Recent Years:

- Various law firms
- Jenny Craig
- Fairness.com
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
- Boston Mobilization
- Center for New Words
- Brigham and Women's Hospital

*Students can secure placements individually or with the assistance of the Career Education Center.

PHILOSOPHY LIASON

The Philosophy Liaison is the organization of philosophy majors charged with planning and sponsoring activities for philosophy concentrators and interested students.

Each spring, the Liaison meets to elect new officers for the following academic year.

The four officers and their functions are as follows:

President:	sets agendas and convenes meetings; represents the Liaison at SGA meetings and at department meetings
Vice-President:	assists the president in all activities
Secretary:	in charge of all communications with Liaison members, the department, and other groups; takes notes at meetings and keeps the Liaison bulletin board current
Treasurer	keeps the Liaison books, handles all financial arrangements (vendors, reimbursements for expenses, payment of bills)

In the past years, the Liaison has helped organize the annual Career Night Dinner at which interested students may meet members of the Philosophy Department faculty, alums, and philosophy majors and discuss career opportunities for philosophy majors. The Liaison also helps organize the Department's Independent Learning Symposium each spring, at which students report on their Independent Learning projects and experiences. In addition to these activities, past Liaisons have often organized fundraising events, (bake sales and vendors), discussion groups with Faculty, "Philosophy Tea-Time" sessions, and trips to attend lectures in the Boston area.

The Liaison fosters a sense of community among philosophy majors. You can meet the students in your classes in an informal environment and enjoy working together on activities of mutual interest. All majors, minors and other interested students are eligible to belong. Meetings are posted on the Philosophy Department bulletin board outside of C310. If a meeting time conflicts with your schedule, contact one of the officers to indicate your interest in participating.

FACULTY

Shirong Luo, Ph.D.

University of Miami

Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Specializes in Chinese philosophy, Asian philosophy and religion, ethics and comparative philosophy.

Diane Raymond, Ph.D.

New York University

Professor of Philosophy, Dean of CAS
Specializes in feminist philosophy, applied ethics, and critical theory.

Sue Stafford, Ph.D.

University of Connecticut

Professor of Philosophy
Specializes in applied ethics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind.

Wanda Torres Gregory, Ph.D.

Boston University

Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy
Specializes in philosophy of language, logic, contemporary philosophy, and nineteenth-century philosophy.

Jo Trigilio, Ph.D.

University of Oregon

Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Specializes in feminist theory, American pragmatism, social and political theory, applied ethics, and sexuality studies.

Simmons College
Department of Philosophy
PHIL 370: Internship in Philosophy

Supervisor Evaluation

Evaluations are requested within 1 week of the completion of the internship. Use a separate sheet if appropriate.

Please provide an evaluation of the work of _____

Supervisor's Signature

Date _____