



Philosophy Majors' Handbook

Fall 2019-Spring 2020



B.A.: Philosophy
B.A.: Philosophy: Religious Studies

Minors: Philosophy
Religious Studies
Peace & Conflict Studies
Applied Ethics

Dual and Double Majors Possible
Accelerated BA/MA Program Possible

Minor in Peace & Conflict Studies

Department of Philosophy
Anderson Hall 220
West Chester University
West Chester, PA 19383
610-436-2841
rsykes@wcupa.edu
Mpierlott@wcupa.edu

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About the Handbook

This handbook is a supplement to the WCU *Undergraduate Catalog*. It is intended for majors, minors and prospective students in the Department of Philosophy at West Chester University. Annual revisions will reflect important changes to the program, so be sure you've got the most recent version.

In this handbook you will find an account of the nature and value of studying philosophy; a partial listing of the many jobs available to those who hold philosophy degrees; information on the Philosophy Department in general; a description of the major and minor programs; advice from students and faculty that will help you excel in the program and in life.

If you have ideas for future versions of the handbook, please email them to our Chair, Dr. Matthew Pierlott (mpierlott@wcupa.edu) to our office administrator, Mrs. Rose Sykes (rsykes@wcupa.edu). Items that make the student's life easier are especially encouraged. If there are sections that don't seem particularly pertinent, let us know that too.

Part 1: Program Requirements

The Department of Philosophy offers two concentrations leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree.

The philosophy concentration surveys the history of philosophy, explores its major disciplines and focuses on selected topics of perennial interest. The purpose of the program is to develop the organizational, analytic and expressive skills required for law school, graduate work in philosophy and other fields, and the wide range of careers in government, business and industry.

Through an exploration of Western and non-Western world religions, the religious studies concentration provides preparation for careers in fields where an understanding of religious cultural background and diversity is crucial, such as education, public relations, international affairs and business. This degree may also serve as a foundation for students planning on a religious vocation.

Requirements Common to the B.A. Programs

General Education Requirements 48 semester hours

Students are required to complete 48 hours of general education credits as outlined in the Undergraduate Catalog for the year they entered the University or the year in which they returned to the University (if not attending classes for two consecutive semesters) or if returning from academic probation, etc.

Foreign Language/Culture Cluster Requirement 0-15 semester hours

Two years of the same language (or proof of competency) or the culture cluster option may be taken. Refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for more details.

Major Requirements 30 semester hours

Free Electives 27-42 semester hours

Free electives are to be taken at the discretion of the student. Students may choose to pursue one or two minors to fulfill these elective credit hours.

Major Requirements

B.A. Philosophy:

Required Core Courses	18 semester hours
PHI190*, 270*, 272*, 355, 412 and 499 (* must be passed with a "C" or better)	
Diversity Course	3 semester hours
One course from among PHI204, 205 or 405	
Philosophy Electives (under advisement) **	9 semester hours

B.A. Philosophy: Religious Studies (for those entering the major Fall '09 or after)

Required Core Courses	15 semester hours
PHI101, 102, 206, 204 or 205, and 414	
Philosophy or other Electives (under advisement)	15 semester hours
From the following list:	

Ideas of the Bible (PHI349), Introduction to Islam (PHI220), Philosophies & Religions of India (PHI204), Philosophies and Religions of the Far East (PHI205), Medieval Philosophy (PHI271), Ancient Philosophy (PHI270), Modern Philosophy (PHI272), Religion in the United States (PHI130), Theology and Science (PHI125), Philosophies of Non-Violence (PHI207), Women and Religion (PHI390), Sociology of Religion (SOC344), Magic, Religion & Witchcraft (ANT344) or, New Religious Movements (PHI310).

Minor Requirements

Philosophy minor:	18 semester hours
Required courses	12 semester hours
PHI101, 150 or 190, 174 or 180, and 270 or 271 or 272	
Philosophy electives (under advisement)	6 semester hours
Religious Studies minor	18 semester hours
Required courses	9 semester hours
PHI102, 206 and 204 or 205	
Religious Studies electives (under advisement)	9 semester hours
See above B.A. list (at least two at 300-level or above)	

**Religious Studies courses (PHI102, 130, 206, 220, 310, 349 and 390) may not be used as electives for the Philosophy major or minor.

Also housed in the Philosophy Department

Applied Ethics minor:	18 semester hours
Required courses	9 semester hours
PHI150, 180 or 190, and 412	
Any two of the following:	6 semester hours
PHI207, 340, 371, 373, 411, 421, 480, 481, 482	
Philosophy or related elective (under advisement)	3 semester hours

Peace & Conflict Studies minor 18 semester hours

Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.50 to register for SSC400.

1. **Two required courses** 6 semester hours
 PAX 200 Intro to Peace & Conflict Studies
 PAX 400 Peace & Conflict Studies Seminar (to be taken towards the end of your program, preferably in your final year)

2. **Choose one course from each of the next four categories** 12 semester hours
 (only one can be below the 300-level)
 - a. *Political Thought/International Relations* (3 semester hours)
 PHI 411 (Problems of War) or 481 (Philosophies of Human Rights) or 482 (Social Philosophy); **PSC** 320 (American Foreign Policy) or 317 (Contemporary International Relations); **GEO** 352 (Geo-politics); **SOC** 376 (Sociology of War and Peace); **HIS/WOS** 329 (Gender and Peace); **LIT** 162 (Literature of the Apocalypse); **SSC** 201 (Global Perspectives); **CRJ** 304 (Comparative Justice Systems)

 and
 - b. *Dynamics of Activism and Advocacy* (3 semester hours)
 WRH 315 (Propaganda, Power, and Politics) or WRH 335 (Advocacy Writing) or PHI 207 (Philosophies of Nonviolence)

 and
 - c. *Communication/Negotiation Skills* (3 semester hours)
 COM 204 (Interpersonal Communication) or 216 (Small Group Communication) or 410 (Conflict Resolution) or CRJ 470 (Interpersonal Relations) (permission of instructor required for the 400-level classes; Peace & Conflict Studies students are welcome)

 and
 - d. *Power & Politics/Social Justice* (3 semester hours)
 GEO 332 (Environmental Crisis) or 230 (Conservation of Natural Resources); HIS 332 (The Holocaust) or 375 (A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict) or 362 (Violence in America); LIT 309 (Martin Luther King); PSC 323 (The Politics of Race, Class, and Gender) or 340 (Latin American Politics); SOC 335 (Racial and Cultural Minorities) or 341 (Social Stratification); SWO 225 (Race Relations); WOS 315 (Third World Women).

Additional requirement:

- 3. Students are expected to attend six Peace & Conflict-related campus or community events.** Those events that qualify will be advertised via email through the Peace & Conflict Studies distribution list, and will be tracked by the director of the program. Students are encouraged to attend at least two a year. Transfer students who transfer in 70 credits or more are required to attend two Peace & Conflict-related events total. Transfer students who transfer in 40-70 credits are required to attend four events. Transferring in fewer than 40 credits commits you to all six events.

Peace & Conflict Studies minor 18 semester hours
(for those declaring the minor prior to Fall 2010)

Required courses 12 semester hours
PAX200, PHI411 or PSC317, HIS/WOS329 or PHI207, COM204 or 216

Interdisciplinary electives 6 semester hours
From the following list; must be different departments or disciplines:

BIO 102; COM 312 or 410; CRJ 470; GEO 232; HIS 332, 352, 362 or 372; LIT 162 or 309; PHI 482; PSC 323; SOC 335, 341; SSC 201; SWO 225; WOS 315.

Christina of Sweden (1626-1689) Reigned from 1644 until her abdication in 1654. Student of Descartes. Author of Maxims of Queen (compiled 1907) and Letters de Descartes (compiled 1663)



Accelerated BA/MA in Philosophy

*** NEW IN 2016 ***

To be considered for the accelerated program, students must have completed 75 credits with a minimum of 18 Philosophy credits, earned at least a “B” in all Philosophy courses and lastly, students must provide one letter of recommendation from a WCU Philosophy faculty member.

Make an appointment with the Chair to discuss this option and get more details.

Academic Advising

Your academic advisor counsels you on your path to graduation. In addition to “removing your scheduling flag” (allowing you access to scheduling) and assisting you to choose the courses required to graduate in a timely fashion, your academic advisor can help you find valuable on-campus resources as well as point you in various directions after graduation. He or she can be a mentor as well as a philosophy professor.

It’s important to remember, though, that YOU are ultimately responsible for your academic record—not your advisor. So, educate yourself.

It is also important to be aware of the resources for students on campus. Please use the front section of your Undergraduate Catalog to locate student offices such as the Office of the Bursar (to pay your bill), the Office of the Registrar (for registration and graduation) and Public Safety (parking permits and emergencies).

Student services such as tutoring, counseling and the writing center are also included in the front section of the Undergraduate Catalog.

The Philosophy Department has in-house tutors. Our Graduate Assistants post their hours early in the term. They can be especially helpful in the core philosophy courses. Seek them out if you’re having difficulty in your philosophy classes.

Maimonides (1135-1204) aka Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon. One of the most influential early Torah Scholars. Contemporary of Averroes. Advocate of Aristotelian thought. Author of “13 Principles of Faith” and The Guide to the Perplexed.



Double Major/Dual-Degree

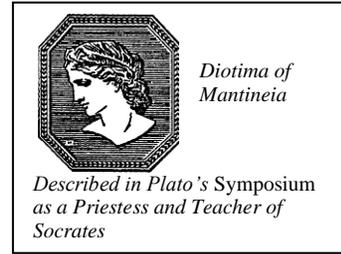
Frequently students pair a philosophy or religious studies major with another discipline. Majoring in two fields within the same degree is referred to as “double majoring.” If your interests are in two different degree programs, e.g., a B.A. and a B.F.A., this is called “dual majoring.” In either case, you must meet all requirements for both pursuits. Consult the Undergraduate Catalog and your advisors in both programs, to make sure you’re proceeding appropriately.

Honors College

An option for highly motivated, academically talented students, the Honors College substitutes its own leadership-focused, service-oriented, high-quality academic curriculum for the normal general education distributive requirements. It is a far-sighted academic choice for the qualified student, and a good match for the philosophy major. Dr. Ruth Porritt, Professor of Philosophy, and Dr. Matthew Pierlott, Associate Professor of Philosophy, both teach courses in the Honors Program. Seek either of them out for more details about the program.

Part 2: Studying Philosophy

What Is Philosophy?



The discipline of [Western] philosophy has been shaped by an intellectual and historical tradition that began some 2500 years ago in the Greek culture of the eastern Mediterranean region, although similar developments also occurred independently elsewhere in other cultures, both earlier and subsequently. In the language of the ancient Greeks, “philosophy” literally meant “love of wisdom.” Certain pioneering thinkers among them sought to put this “love of wisdom” into practice in a form of disciplined reflection about ourselves, our world, the good life, our dealings with one another, and an expanding range of other matters of interest and importance to them. The earliest Greek philosophers experimented with comprehensive interpretations and explanations of the world in which we find ourselves, replacing myths with theoretical reasoning about its nature. Socrates, mindful of the Delphic injunction “know thyself,” then drew attention to the importance of reflection upon human life and conduct. Contending that the unexamined life is not worth living, he set an example of inquiry that has inspired countless others ever since.

Philosophy has developed and changed in many ways, but it fundamentally continues these kinds of thinking. Its problems and materials are drawn from every aspect of our lives and experience, and its deliberations extend to every subject admitting of disciplined reflection. It once embraced nearly all forms of inquiry, as can still be seen in the title of the highest degree granted in most scholarly and scientific disciplines—“Doctor of Philosophy.”

The study of philosophy serves to develop intellectual abilities important for life as a whole, beyond the knowledge and skills required for any particular profession. Properly pursued, it enhances analytical, critical and communicative capacities that are applicable to any subject-matter, and in any human context. It cultivates the capacity and appetite for self-expression and reflection, for exchange and debate of ideas, for life-long learning, and for dealing with problems for which there are no easy answers. In doing this, a good philosophical education also strengthens the ability to participate responsibly and intelligently in public life and the tasks of citizenship.

As we say on our website: "While philosophy may sound dauntingly remote from daily concerns, its basic questions actually pose themselves continually throughout any thinking person's life, and the skills it teaches – including close reading, careful thinking, the critique of old arguments, and the construction of new ones – apply to many areas of human endeavor. A background in philosophy is thus excellent training for any number of careers – and matchless preparation for life itself."*

* Extracted from the *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 80:5; May 2007, pp. 76-89.

The Practical Value of Philosophy

While there may be something to be said for the idea that many who come to philosophy do so simply because they enjoy it and value the activity itself, it would be misleading to think that philosophy is irrelevant to our practical concerns. Philosophy often is engaged in the real world and *does* help prepare us to lead fruitful lives.

One way to speak about the practical benefits of pursuing a degree in philosophy is to cite the success of philosophy majors in a variety of pursuits, especially in medical, legal, and post-graduate education. For example, the rate of acceptance of philosophy majors to medical schools is very competitive, beating out biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, with only four of the other 31 majors listed by a 1981 Association of Medical Colleges Report meeting or exceeding that rate.* Philosophy majors also outperform the other 10 most popular pre-law majors, as well as the other 9 most popular Arts and Humanities majors on the LSATs.

According to the Educational Testing Service's *2005-2006 Guide to the Use of Scores*, philosophy majors receive the highest scores of all majors in the Verbal Reasoning and the Analytical Writing sections of the GREs, and fifteenth (out of 50) in Quantitative Reasoning. Religion students also score well: sixth in both Verbal Reasoning and Analytical Writing.

Philosophy serves practical ends in three very important ways: by providing foundational skills for decision-making and understanding, by enhancing one's appreciation of the diversity of intellectual pursuits, and by engaging the deepest issues of value directly.

First, the bedrock of all philosophy is the exercise of critical thinking skills. The study of philosophy allows one to encounter many of the most important and challenging texts, both contemporary and historical. The reading, writing and discussing that takes place during the study of philosophy provide wonderful practice for the complicated real-life situations we all must face, in the workplace, in a public forum or in our private lives. Philosophy, more than any other discipline, helps us learn how to think well, no matter what it is we are thinking about.

Second, the content areas of philosophy have a broad range (as many other disciplines historically grew out from philosophy), which means that the study of philosophy can easily provide two advantages: a broad view of how much of human knowledge is interrelated, and an enhanced understanding of a particular field of study. For example, a political science major would benefit greatly from double-majoring in philosophy, since social and political philosophy courses will deepen her understanding of her own field. The same can be said for the natural sciences, psychology, sociology, economics, mathematics, literature, history, and art and music.

* The AAMC site currently lumps all humanities degrees together. More recent data on philosophy alone is hard to find. Sources: Chronicle of Higher Education, *Almanac of Higher Education: 1996*. Educational Testing Service, "Guide to the Graduate Record Examination Program, 1996-1997." American Bar Association, "Preparation for a Legal Education." Association of American Law Schools, "Policy on Pre-legal Education." Law School Admissions Council, "1996 Data Services Group Report." American Bar Association, "LSAT Data File, 1996-97." Graduate Management Admission Council, "Profile of Graduate Management Admissions Test Candidates, 1997-98 to 2001-02." American Association of Medical Colleges, "Characteristics of the 1999 MCAT Examinees, 1999" and "Applicants Matriculant File, 11/22/2000." For more helpful information, go to: <http://www.philosophy.duq.edu/major-minor-guide0708.pdf>

This added perspective can provide an edge over others who ignored philosophy and its history, providing a much fuller understanding and generating greater insights.

Third, a good deal of philosophy directly deals with questions of value. What could be more practical than spending time studying current moral and political issues in order to make the most informed decisions you can? Whether one is examining theories on the good life, ways of navigating issues of religion and spirituality, or responses to pressing personal or social issues, the study of philosophy allows students to spend time reflecting on the most important aspects of our lives.

Philosophy, then, may only appear to be impractical. One of the central themes throughout the history of philosophy has been distinguishing reality from mere appearance, so that one is not misled. In fact, many have been attracted to philosophy precisely because it helps liberate us from misleading appearances, dogma, and faulty reasoning. Perhaps this freedom from our own ignorance and from the manipulation of others is itself one of the most treasured practical benefits of philosophical inquiry. In any case, we should not let stereotypes about philosophy mislead us: philosophy is a thoroughly useful area of study, with the added benefit of being enjoyable for its own sake.

The Link between Getting a Degree and Getting a Job

A CNN.com report from 2000 breaks down the careers pursued by philosophy majors.[†] About 52% of philosophy majors go on to advanced degrees. The remaining 48% break roughly into the following categories: one-third can be found in the clergy or “in other religious jobs in churches, synagogues, mosques and temples.” About a third can be found in the private sector doing executive, administrative and managerial work. About 5% work as “writers, editors, broadcasters and public relations specialists.” And, the rest are spread throughout the business world in occupations such as insurance, stocks and bonds, real estate, sales and the service industry.

So here’s the bottom line: Philosophy majors do exceptionally well on professional entry exams such as the GREs, LSATs, MCATs, etc. The skills one develops in the study of philosophy are key to success in *any* field; i.e., thinking critically and carefully, expressing ideas coherently and concisely, and developing the confidence and capacity for alert, balanced and unbiased questioning. The study of philosophy is preparation, not for any one field, but for life itself—publicly and privately.

[†] Find the whole article here: http://money.cnn.com/2000/10/13/career/q_degreephilosophy/index.htm

Philosophy Department Internships

*** NEW IN 2015 ***

The Philosophy Department offers students the voluntary opportunity to do internships, an educational opportunity which places students outside the regular classroom environment. PHI 401 is an elective that provides students with field placement learning in organizational settings which reflect their interests. The fitting internship will make use of the skills we teach in the Philosophy Department, such as engaging in critical thinking, deliberating ethical considerations, analyzing social-political problems, justifying aesthetic choices, generating and evaluating solutions to value conflicts, and so forth. Internships are intended for students to explore various areas of employment options or career interests, to contribute to the success of an organization, to build upon classroom learning, to expand intellectual inquiry, to enhance resumes, to network, to develop job-related skills, and to develop personally as well as professionally. Students may complete internships in several areas, including environmental agencies, non-profit service organizations, editing, public relations, human resources, medical settings and law.

PHI 401 enhances the students' preparation for job interviewing and job placement, making WCU graduates more competitive. According to a 2014 Gallop Poll, "When hiring, U.S. business leaders say the amount of knowledge the candidate has in a field, as well as applied skills, are more important factors than where a candidate attended school or what their college major was."[‡] By practicing the application of ethical theory to "real world" situations, students develop skills that are increasingly more in demand, given the recent flourishing of the global "sustainable business movement," marked by organizations such as the Social Venture Network and Ethisphere.

Philosophy internships are open to students with Junior status and an overall GPA of 3.0. Please contact the department for more information.

Saint Augustine, born in 354, Bishop of Hippo (now Tunisia) until his death in 430, philosopher and African Theologian. Confessions and City of God are his best known works.



Careers Open to Post-graduation Majors

[‡] www.gallup.com/poll/167546/business-leaders-say-knowledge-trumps-college-pedigree. Retrieved 8-16-2014.

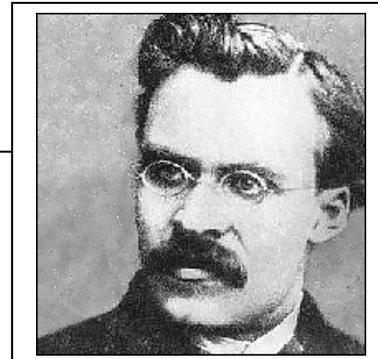
The University of Florida's Philosophy Department has a very informative "The Philosophy Major's Career Handbook." You can find it here: <http://web.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad/ugcrhbk.html>. And, here's a glimpse of how helpful they are. Parsing out your post-graduation options, you will either go on to further education or you'll seek employment.

Postgraduation Choices			
Further Education		Employment	
Graduate	Professional	Public	Private
Philosophy Related discipline	Law Medicine Journalism Business	Teaching Civil Service Politics/public service	Self-employed Other employed

Keep your eye open for our Career Workshops, offered every spring. This workshop includes recent graduates who share their experiences and advice.

Also, seek advice from the Career Development Center in Lawrence Center, Room 225, as you progress through your degree. It's never too early to begin thinking about your post-graduation life.

Fredrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) Famous for concepts like the Übermensch (Superman), master and slave morality, and the "eternal recurrence". Author of numerous books, such as Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is and Beyond Good and Evil.



Philosophers in Non-Academic Careers

The November 20, 2007 issue of *The Guardian* (U.K.) included an article on the increasing demand for philosophy majors in the workplace, noting that “Philosophy graduates are suddenly all the rage with employers.” An April 6, 2008 article in *The New York Times* quotes the executive director of the American Philosophical Association as saying that the philosophy degree makes sense for these times. In a time when people change jobs and careers repeatedly, philosophy is “a major that helps [students] become quick learners and gives them strong skills in writing, analysis and critical thinking”; something that all employers would ultimately prefer. [Here’s](#) more recent proof from *The Washington Post* (2015).

The fields of philosophy and religious studies focus on the following set of valuable skills:

- *Logic and critical thinking* – the ability to scrutinize and evaluate evidence and reasoning
- *Interpretation and comprehension* – the ability to examine and understand new ideas and problems in order to plan creative and intelligent responses to them
- *Flexibility of thought and perspective* – the ability to “walk a mile in someone else’s shoes” and to think creatively – a crucial skill for collaboration and leadership.

Philosophy and religious studies majors are finding careers in business, law, journalism, publishing, politics and public policy, non-profit organizations, ministry, and education—to name just a few. West Chester Alumnus Bill Cannon put his degree to work in his career in Business Journalism, noting that “Good writing is good thinking. There are few if any other disciplines that foster keenness of thought as does the study of philosophy.”

Some of the careers mentioned above require graduate education and, here, too, philosophy can serve you well. As mentioned in the “Practical Benefits” section, philosophy and religious studies majors score well on the GREs (the statistical test many graduate schools require for entrance). In like manner, philosophy majors score near the top of groups taking the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT).

Finally, the skills noted above have an advantage over vocational and specialized professional training because they can be applied in many and diverse contexts in the work world, a distinct advantage in changing economic times.

Pop Quiz!!

Which of the following were philosophy majors?

- Stephen Breyer, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court
- David Souter, Supreme Court Justice
- George Stephanopoulos, ABC Anchor (former White House Press Secretary)
- Bruce Lee, martial artist and actor
- Pearl Buck, author
- Richard Gere, actor
- Mary Higgins Clark, mystery writer
- Albert Schweitzer, Nobel Laureate
- Rudi Giuliani, former mayor of New York

(Answer: See your local philosophy professor and find out!)

Descartes (1596-1650), often referred to as the founder of modern philosophy. His Meditations on First Philosophy is a staple of undergraduate philosophy courses.



Our Own Graduates

Many go on to graduate school. Others find employment in the public or private sector. A handful of examples follow:

- Rev. Beverly Wenrich (B.A. 1979), serves as pastor of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church in Geigertown, PA.
- Dr. Michael Duff (B.A. 1981), Professor at University of Wyoming School of Law
- Dr. Stephen Lahey (B.A. 1986), is Associate Professor in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.
- Dr. Timothy Golden (Minor in Philosophy, 1990, WCU Philosophy M.A., 2006). PhD in Philosophy at University of Memphis
- Dr. Benjamin M. Wolkow (B.A. Philosophy, 1992), Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Classical Studies, Duke University
- Dr. Dawn K. Kriebel (B.A. Philosophy and Psychology, 1996), Associate Professor of Psychology, Immaculata University
- Mr. Marc Unger (B.A. Philosophy, 2003), 2009 USA Martial Arts Hall of Fame inductee; founder and owner of The Rising Sun Karate Academy, Exton, PA
- Mr. Anton Shannon (B.A. Philosophy, 2007), runs a Good Work Farm – a community supported agricultural farm
- Mr. Brian Pakpour (M.A. Philosophy, 2009), graduated with a J.D. from Santa Clara University
- Mr. Lawrence Tamaccio (B.A. Philosophy, 2008), graduated with a JD from Quinnipiac University School of Law in CT
- Mr. Brian T. Jones (B.A. Philosophy, 2007; WCU Philosophy M.A., 2009), graduated from Boston Psychoanalytic Institute with a degree in Clinical Psychoanalysis.
- Dr. Russell Waltz (M.A. Philosophy, 2004), Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Kansas, currently teaching at Miami Dade College.
- A selection of those currently in grad school: (this needs updating, but we'll get to it soon!)
 - Samantha Noll (B.A. Philosophy, 2008), in Ph.D. program in Philosophy at Michigan State University, started Fall 2010
 - Donovan Martin (M.A. Philosophy, 2009), pursuing a Ph.D. in Philosophy and Literature, at Purdue University
 - Josh Cutts (M.A. Philosophy, 2014), pursuing a Ph.D. in Philosophy at Temple University
 - Dan Dalmonte (M.A. Philosophy, 2013), pursuing a Ph.D. in Philosophy at Temple University
 - Jason Keyser (M.A. Philosophy, 2012), pursuing a Ph.D. in Philosophy at Temple University

Part 3: The Philosophy Department

History

IN 2015-16 WE CELEBRATED OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY!!!!

West Chester University of Pennsylvania, founded as West Chester Academy in 1812, became a four-year college in 1927. It has offered a bachelor's degree in philosophy since 1965, when the department was founded by Dr. George Claghorn, who continued as chair for the next 32 years. The master's degree is the only M.A. in Philosophy in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Ed (PASSHE) and has been offered since 1970. While teaching undergraduates remains our top priority, we have a vibrant and growing graduate student population many of whom have gone on to Ph.D. programs in philosophy; most recently to such schools as University of Memphis, Southern Illinois University, Temple University and Duquesne University. Our undergraduates go on to law school, Ph.D. programs in various disciplines, or to jobs in business, banking, computers and seminary, among others.

Mission

The Philosophy Department at West Chester University is committed to responding both to the need for flexibility in academic programs offered at WCU, and to offering a stable core curriculum that addresses the perennial need to spark intellectual curiosity, broaden perspective, and think carefully, critically and ethically about the practical and personal challenges that face the U.S. and the global community in the 21st century.

Offering philosophy and religious studies bachelors' degrees and minors in both disciplines, and also housing the peace & conflict studies minor, our department emphasizes the continuity between the innovative thought that addresses timely questions within the history of both philosophy and religion. At the same time, we address the growing need to increase the ethical creativity of our students with exposure to the increasingly important areas of business ethics, biomedical ethics, environmental ethics, globalization issues, and the challenges of religious pluralism. We are committed to maintaining and strengthening our departmental programs according to our core values of careful analytical thought, breadth of perspective, and ethical creativity. At the same time we must respond to the changing face of philosophy and religious studies by adapting our departmental curriculum as new questions and challenges arise.

Thus, the mission of the Philosophy Department is to aid our students in broadening their perspective through exposure to diversity of thought and belief, and to provide the tools of careful reasoning and ethical creativity that are indispensable for navigating an increasingly complex world and that are essential for forming the sorts of communities that cherish rather than erode diversity. At the same time both disciplines require rigorous and careful thinking that is analytical and critical yet holistic and interpretive. This combination helps to shape an individual with the intellectual flexibility to respond to the changing and equally important demands of both career and personal fulfillment.

Student Learning Outcomes

Our mission inspires and grounds the following learning outcomes, and focuses on how a foundation in philosophy can enhance the study of any number of disciplines (political science, law, psychology, education, business, history and the natural sciences, to name a few). Some of our students wish to pursue a career in academic philosophy and others simply wish to explore some of the deepest issues with which humans have struggled.

Philosophy BA – Program Outcomes

Outcomes are divided into 4 areas, each with two parts: Content Knowledge, Information Literacy, Applications, and Critical Reasoning

Content Knowledge

- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to identify key figures, concepts, theoretical perspectives and historical eras in philosophy
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to describe philosophical concepts related to diversity and diverse perspectives, including ethical, social, political, or intercultural concepts

Information Literacy

- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to access, evaluate, and cite discipline appropriate information by answering test questions
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to integrate discipline appropriate information by composing an original research paper

Applications

- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to apply ethical theories in philosophy to real-world cases
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to compose an essay which makes a novel, well-reasoned argument and defends the argument against at least one likely objection

Critical Reasoning

- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate arguments from selected texts
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to define and apply logical terminology: deductive, inductive, validity, soundness, strength, cogency, fallacies

Religious Studies Concentration – Program Outcomes

These are divided into 4 groups: Content Knowledge, Information Literacy, Applications, Critical Reasoning

Content Knowledge

- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to explain accurately key concepts in religious studies
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to describe religious studies concepts related to diversity and diverse perspectives, including ethical, social, political, or intercultural concepts

Information Literacy

- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to access, evaluate, and cite discipline appropriate information
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to integrate discipline appropriate information by composing an original research paper

Applications

- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to apply concepts in religious studies to real-world cases
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to compose an essay which makes a novel, well-reasoned argument and defends the argument against at least one likely objection

Critical Reasoning

- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate arguments from selected texts



Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889 - 1951). One of the most important 20th Century philosophers. Upon publication of the only of his philosophical works published in his lifetime—the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus—believing he'd solved all philosophical puzzles, he left the discipline and became a gardener and architect.

Four Models of Philosophical Learning

According to the American Philosophical Association, there are four primary approaches to learning philosophy: 1) historical, 2) field, 3) problems and 4) activity models (<http://www.albright.edu/catalog/APA-Statement-on-Philosophy.pdf>). Our Philosophy Department offers courses that incorporate all four of these types, providing you with a balanced and comprehensive curriculum.

For courses that use the **historical** model, the history of philosophy is the theme organizing your classes. For the western philosophical tradition, you begin with Ancient Philosophy and trace a narrative forward in time through Modern Philosophy, learning the problems and methods philosophers developed in response to each other as well as to their lived, cultural contexts. The writings of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume and Kant have historical importance for philosophy. While the story of philosophy unfolds, you also have a chance to use philosophical practices of critique to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each philosopher's arguments.

For courses that use the **field** model, a particular area of philosophy is the theme that organizes your classes. The area might be ethics, aesthetics, logic, philosophy of law or philosophy of science, for example. Within these fields you explore how philosophers have addressed questions related to problems specific to that area. You can also study how another area, such as medical science, contributes to defining some problems in ethics; the combination of these two fields becomes the subfield of biomedical ethics. If you are interested in areas of philosophical interest such as Buddhism, you also have the opportunity to study how this domain developed its own fields of intellectual inquiry.

For courses that use the **problems** model, a particular philosophical "puzzle" is the theme that organizes your classes. You might take a course addressing a persistent philosophical issue such as the Mind/Body Problem or Free Will. These special topics are offered in PHI 201 Contemporary Issues, PHI 350 Philosophical Topics: 20th Century and Beyond, as well as the PHI 499 Philosophic Concepts and Systems.

For courses that use the **activity** model, the *process* of doing philosophy is the theme that organizes your classes. The role of inquiry, skeptical doubt, and argumentative procedures are examined to help answer the questions "How has philosophy been done in the past?" and "How should we do philosophy now?" PHI190 Logic would be the most obvious course demonstrating the importance of argumentation. As recent philosophers have wondered about how gender, race, class, international relations and differing cultural traditions have influenced what has been included or excluded from philosophical consideration, the process of doing philosophy has undergone change. The activity model can be used alongside other models of learning. For example, in PHI 180 Introduction to Ethics you learn a field (ethics) even as you address the activity of doing philosophy in a way that resists the structures and dynamics of oppression.

Philosophy and Religious Studies Course Offerings

- 100 **Creating Meaning: Introduction to Existentialism** emphasizing film and literature (3) Existentialism was one of the most influential intellectual currents of the 20th century. Through film, literature, and the primary philosophical texts of existential philosophers, such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Simone de Beauvoir, the course will explore basic existential themes such as “being,” “nonbeing,” the formation of values, “dread,” “anxiety,” and “alienation.” *Approved humanities course.*
- 101 **Introduction to Philosophy** (3) The chief problems and methods of philosophic thought, with a survey of some typical solutions. The place and influence of philosophy in life today. *Approved humanities course.*
- 102 **Introduction to Religious Studies** (3) The role of religion in human life. Illustrations drawn from various traditions, rituals, and belief patterns, both ancient and modern. *Approved interdisciplinary and writing emphasis course*
- 125 **Theology and Science: Enemies or Partners** (3) An inquiry into the relationship of theology to the natural sciences. Team taught by a physicist and a philosopher, the course investigates how ideas of God have been affected by advances in physics and biology. *Crosslisted as PHY 125.*
- 130 **Religion in the United States** (3) (formerly, Religion in America) This course will explore the rich diversity of religions in the United States and the impact of religion on our culture. *Approved diverse communities course.*
- 150 **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving** (3) An introduction to the principles needed for effective thinking and evaluation of arguments in practical situations. Topics include procedures and guidelines for identifying and evaluating arguments, recognizing and eliminating fallacies, and writing and criticizing argumentative essays. *Approved humanities course.*
- 174 **Principles of the Arts** (3) A critical examination of traditional and contemporary aesthetic theories from diverse cultural perspectives to extend students' thinking about the "concept" as well as the "experience" of art. Visual and literary arts are emphasized, as well as how to live a more artful life. *Approved interdisciplinary course*
- 180 **Introduction to Ethics** (3) Introduction to major theories and contemporary work in moral philosophy, offering tools for ethical decision making in our daily lives with an emphasis on the influence of culture, power, and privilege. *Approved humanities and diverse communities course*
- 190 **Logic** (3) Introduction to deductive and inductive logic, with emphasis on classical syllogistic and symbolic logic. Topics include arguments, categorical propositions and classes, immediate inferences, Venn diagrams, rules of syllogism, propositional functions, truth tables, and predicate logic.
- PAX 200 **Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies** (3) An interdisciplinary inquiry into the nature and causes of social conflict. The aim throughout is to find ways of avoiding destructive conflict, whether through negotiation or other means. The issue of justice as a factor in conflict receives special attention. *Approved interdisciplinary course*
- 201 **Contemporary Issues** (3) Discussion and analysis of contemporary philosophical issues. The topic varies from semester to semester. *This course may be taken again for credit.*
- 204 **Philosophies and Religions of India** (3) The religious and philosophical heritage of India, from Vedic times to the present. Examination of major classics, such as Rig Veda, Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita, and Yoga-sutras; recent writers such as Tagore, Gandhi, and Radhakrishnan.
- 205 **Philosophies and Religions of the Far East** (3) A survey of Far Eastern philosophy, religion, and scientific thought. Confucianism, Taoism, and the various schools of Mahayana Buddhism, including Zen, are given primary emphasis.

- 206 **Religions of the West** (3) An introduction to the three major traditions of the West: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. By exploring their earliest heritage, including founders, scriptures, early institutions and practices, the course will then address how these traditions were preserved, reinvented, and sometimes transformed in response to social change and political upheaval. *Approved humanities course.*
- 207 **Philosophies of Nonviolence** (3) An examination of the concepts of violence and nonviolence, especially as seen by recent thinkers. The course attempts to link theory with practice by considering the contributions of Tolstoy, Gandhi, Thoreau, and other philosophers, religious thinkers, and activists. *Approved humanities course.*
- 220 **Introduction to Islam** (3) A general introduction to Islam which will focus on the sources for Muslim belief and practices, the diversity within the Muslim community, and modern movements within Islam and the Muslim community. *Approved humanities course*
- 270 **History of Ancient Philosophy** (3) A survey of the major figures of ancient philosophy, from the pre-Socratic period through Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, and Stoics, to the Skeptics and Neo-Platonists. *Latin or Greek Culture cluster*
- 271 **History of Medieval Philosophy** (3) The history of philosophy from the early Church founders to the late Middle Ages. St. Augustine, St. Thomas, mysticism, Jewish and Islamic influences, humanism, and the rise of science. *Latin or Greek Culture cluster*
- 272 **History of Modern Philosophy** (3) From Descartes to Hegel. The social, political, and scientific impact of the philosophers. *German Culture cluster*
- 273 **19th-Century Philosophy** (3) Hegel and German Idealism; decisive influences on European and American literature and thought. Survey of the chief themes of Schopenhauer, Comte, Mill, Peirce, Marx, Kierkegaard, Darwin, and Nietzsche. *German Culture cluster*
- 280 **Philosophy and Film** (3) This course helps you understand and discuss philosophy, films, and how the two disciplines intersect. *Approved humanities and diverse communities course.*
- 282 **Animal Ethics** (3) An exploration of the religious, philosophical and scientific perspectives on animals, animal treatment and animal use, including arguments for vegetarian/veganism and of activist groups. *Approved humanities course.*
- 284 **American Philosophies** (3) Leaders in science, literature, religion, and government who have shaped American thought. Philosophers of Puritanism, the Revolution, Transcendentalism, and native schools of Realism, Idealism, and Pragmatism.
- 301 **Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl** (3) This class surveys some major ethical theories and applies them to 15 cases published by the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, in preparation for competing in the Northeastern Regional in November. Ethics Bowl cases are drawn from recent news stories and typically involve a wide spectrum of ethical concerns including environmental and sustainability issues, animal rights, economic justice, civil rights, and reproductive rights. Consent: Permission of the Department required.
- 310 **New Religious Movements** (3) An examination of New Religious Movements, alternative spiritualities and "cults." This course will explore their main beliefs and practices as well as theoretical perspectives for understanding them. *Approved writing emphasis course*
- 330 (also **LIN 330**) **Introduction to Meaning** (3) Discussion of the analysis of meaning given by various disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, linguistics, communication studies, and the arts. *Approved interdisciplinary and writing emphasis course*
- 340 **Contemporary Moral Issues** (3) A philosophical study of some of the major moral issues in contemporary society, such as animal rights, just war theory, abortion, genetic technologies, with an emphasis on the affects of race, gender, class, etc. *Approved writing emphasis course.*

- 349 **Ideas of the Bible** (3) This course will explore major themes in the Bible and their impact on Western culture, including on constructions of gender. Particular attention will be paid to their influence on Western literature, religion and philosophy.
- 350 **Philosophical Topics: The 20th Century and Beyond** (3) A historical survey of the main trends in late 20th century and contemporary philosophy. The topic will vary from semester to semester. *Approved humanities course This course may be taken again for credit.*
- 355 **Political Philosophy** (3) What is the legitimate role of the state? How do we preserve liberty, equality, and produce a just distribution of burdens and benefits in a society? To begin to answer these sorts of questions, this course examines philosophical texts on politics from thinkers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson, Thoreau, Mill and Marx.
- PAX 370 **Israel, Palestine, Power and Peace** (3) Hands-on learning about conflict strategy, negotiation, and non-violent resistance, in the context of in-depth study of the history, dynamics and prospects for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In an intensive workshop format, students conduct negotiations with fellow students, and strategize alternatives to negotiation, such as settlement-building, protests, blockage-running and war. The course also features significant reading assignments, exercises using blogs and twitter, a paper in which students propose a course of action tied to their concept of right resolution of the conflict, and a field trip to Washington, D.C. for briefings on experts on the contemporary course of the conflict.
- 371 **Medical Ethics** (3) The study of philosophical concepts and ethical criteria as applied to health care practice and clinical research. Issues examined and analyzed include problem-solving methods, the theory and practice of informed consent, end-of-life decision making, resource allocation, and problems posed by managed care, research ethics, and environmental concerns. *Approved interdisciplinary course*
- 373 **Business Ethics** (3) The study of philosophical concepts and ethical criteria as applied to business practices. Through case studies and scholarly contributions, the course will cover issues such as the ethical nature of the free market system, foreign outsourcing, and the environmental impact of business, consumer rights, worker rights, and job discrimination, among other issues. *Approved diverse communities course*
- 390 **Women and Religion** (3) This course will explore the ways in which religious beliefs have affected women's lives; how women's opportunities have been both hampered and enhanced by the symbols, beliefs and practices of diverse religious systems; how ideas and images have become implicated in systemic forms of oppression against women; and how women have used ideas and images from these same traditions to undermine violence and exploitation. *Approved diverse communities course*
- PAX 400 **Peace and Conflict Studies Senior Seminar** (3) This course is a capstone experience for Peace & Conflict Studies students to solidify and integrate their study of social justice, activism, international relations and conflict negotiation with real world experience. Students will examine and review the various theoretical insights of the discipline, develop models of conflict management and get hands-on experience with conflict resolution in the real world. PREREQ: PAX200.
- 401 **Internship** (3-15) Provide students with the opportunity to focus on the ethical dimensions of the workplace in both, business and non-profit settings. PREREQ: Junior status and 3.0 GPA
- 405 **Feminist Theory** (3) Designed to introduce and discuss basic questions in contemporary feminist theory, the course will explore different philosophies of feminism and include such issues as motherhood, intersections with other theories of oppression, and body politics. PREREQ: WOS 225 or permission of the instructor. *Crosslisted with WOS 405. Approved interdisciplinary course.*
- 410 **Independent Studies** (1-3) *This course may be taken again for credit.*
- 411 **The Problem of War** (3) An interdisciplinary examination of war and the "war system," including terrorism. Alternatives to war are also considered.

- 412 **Ethical Theories** (3) An inquiry into the meaning, interpretations, and function of ethical theory in our lives. The course will explore some combination of classic, modern, and contemporary ethical theories. PREREQ: PHI 101, 180, or permission of instructor.
- 414 **Philosophy of Religion** (3) Religion and the religious experience as viewed by major Western thinkers. The concepts of God, immortality, religious knowledge, evil, miracles, and the science-religion dialogue.
- 415 **Existentialism** (3) An exploration of important texts in 19th and 20th century existentialism and their influence on contemporary currents in philosophy and the social sciences. PREREQ: Two prior philosophy courses or instructor approval. *French Culture cluster*
- 421 **Philosophy of Law** (3) Consideration of the philosophical foundations of law. Topics may include the nature of law and its relation to rights, liberties, duties, liability, responsibility, and privacy; the nature of judicial reasoning; concepts of responsibility and liability; theories of punishment; causation in the law; discrimination and equality; the relation of law and morality; civil disobedience.
- 422 **Philosophy of Science** (3) The nature of scientific method and scientific theory, with reference to presuppositions, inference, explanation, prediction, applications, and verification. PREREQ: At least one 200-level PHI course (PHI 272 recommended) and one other PHI course or permission of instructor.
- 436 **Symbolic Logic** (3) Principles and methods of symbolic logic. Practice in determining validity of sentential and quantificational arguments. The algebra of classes. PREREQ: PHI 190 or permission of instructor.
- 451 **Religion and Ecology** (3) This course explores contemporary environmental issues from the perspectives of different religious traditions through a postcolonial interreligious lens. We will compare spiritual and religious views of the ecosystem, its meaning, and its relation to human beings. Students will be asked to critically examine these efforts and also explore issues of environmental injustice. Furthermore, this course introduces postcolonial ecocriticism that promises to make new contributions to the analysis of how imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism create basic conditions of inequality between the colonizer and the colonized. This high level online course is offered for both graduate and undergraduate students. PREREQ: Three PHI credits or permission of instructor.
- 480 **Environmental Ethics** (3) Study of arguments and principles surrounding moral questions about the environment: Who and what deserves moral consideration? What are our moral obligations to the environment? What if our obligations to the environment and human beings conflict? Do animals have rights? PREREQ: Three PHI credits or permission of instructor.
- 481 **Philosophy of Human Rights** (3) This course examines the theories of human rights and their bearing on public policy issues such as legitimacy of war and terrorism, economic justice, and whether future generations have rights. Topics include whether basic human rights exist, and if so, what are they, what is their nature or basis, and what arguments can be brought to bear upon these questions. PREREQ: Six credits of philosophy or permission of instructor.
- 482 **Social Philosophy** (3) The relationship between the individual and the social/political order. The good society and the just state as seen by modern and recent Western thinkers, such as Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Nozick, and Rawls. Cutting-edge issues of the present day are also explored. Course is conducted in seminar format.
- 499 **Philosophic Concepts and Systems** (3) An intensive study of the major works of one philosopher or philosophic approach, emphasizing comparison with other views. Required of all philosophy majors. PREREQ: Six hours of philosophy and senior standing, or permission of instructor. *This course may be taken again for credit.*
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Topical Listing of Courses (see previous list for prereqs)

Introductory Courses in Philosophy and Religion

PHI 100 Creating Meaning: Introduction to Existentialism Multiple sections every term.

Approved humanities course

PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy Multiple sections every semester. *Approved humanities course*

PHI 102 Introduction to Religious Studies Multiple sections every semester *Approved interdisciplinary and writing emphasis course*

PHI 150 Critical Thinking. Offered every term. *Approved humanities course*

PHI 174 Principles of the Arts *Approved interdisciplinary course*

PHI 180 Introduction to Ethics Multiple sections every semester. *Approved humanities course*
Diverse communities course

PHI 207 Philosophies of Nonviolence. Offered every spring. *Approved humanities course*

PHI 220 Introduction to Islam *Approved humanities course*

PAX 200 Introduction to Peace & Conflict Studies. Every term. *Approved interdisciplinary course*

Courses in the History of Philosophy

PHI 270 History of Ancient Philosophy. Offered every Fall. *Culture cluster*

PHI 271 History of Medieval Philosophy. *Culture cluster*

PHI 272 History of Modern Philosophy. Offered every Spring. *Culture cluster*

PHI 273 19th Century Philosophy. *Culture cluster*

PHI 284 American Philosophies

PHI 415 Existentialism. Offered every Fall. *Culture cluster*

Courses on other Philosophical Topics

PHI 190 Logic. Offered every semester

PHI 201 Contemporary Issues. Various Topics.

PHI 280 Philosophy and Film *Approved humanities course*

PHI 282 Animal Ethics *Approved humanities course*

PHI 301 Ethics Bowl

PHI 330 (also LIN 330) Introduction to Meaning *Approved interdisciplinary course*

PHI 340 Contemporary Moral Issues *Approved writing emphasis course*

PHI 350 Philosophical Topics: 20th Century and Beyond. Various Topics. *Approved humanities course May be taken again for credit*

PHI 355 Political Philosophy

PAX 370 Israel, Palestine, Power and Peace

PHI 371 Medical Ethics *Approved interdisciplinary course*

PHI 373 Business Ethics *Approved diverse communities course*

PHI 405 (also WOS 405) Feminist Theory *Approved interdisciplinary course*

PAX 400 Peace & Conflict Studies Senior Seminar

PHI 411 The Problem of War

PHI 412 Ethical Theories *Offered every Fall*

PHI 414 Philosophy of Religion

PHI 421 Philosophy of Law

PHI 422 Philosophy of Science

PHI 436 Symbolic Logic

PHI 480 Environmental Ethics

PHI 481 Philosophy of Human Rights

PHI 482 Social Philosophy

Courses in Religion

PHI 204 Philosophies and Religions of India

PHI 205 Philosophies and Religions of the Far East

PHI 206 Religions of the West *Approved humanities course*

PHI 220 Intro to Islam

PHI 310 New Religious Movements *Approved writing emphasis course*

PHI 349 Ideas of the Bible

PHI 390 Women and Religion *Approved diverse communities course*

PHI 414 Philosophy of Religion

PHI 451 Religion and Ecology

Independent Studies and Seminars

PHI301 Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl 3 credits

PHI401 Internship 3-15 credits

PHI 410 Independent Study. 1 – 3 credits. *May be taken again for credit.*

PHI 499 Philosophical Concepts and Systems. Major requirement. *May be taken again for credit.*



Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), one of the most influential thinkers of modern times. Author of the “3 critiques”: Critique of Pure Reason, Critique of Practical Reason, Critique of Judgment, amongst many other works.

Permanent Faculty

Daniel Forbes: *Assistant Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 232

Phone: 436-2841

Email: dforbes@wcupa.edu

B.A., Dickinson College

Ph.D., University of Georgia

Areas of specialization: history of philosophy, Spinoza, metaphysics and epistemology; teaching pedagogy

Steven James: *Associate Professor, Grad Coordinator*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 231 Phone: 436-2841 Email: sjames@wcupa.edu

B.A., University of Colorado

Ph.D., expected 2014, University of Texas at Austin

Areas of specialization: analytic epistemology, philosophy of mind

Dean Johnson: *Associate Professor, Director of Peace & Conflict Studies*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 220C Phone: 430-4423 Email: djohnson4@wcupa.edu

B.S., Manchester University

M.A., Bethany Theological Seminary

Ph.D., Iliff School of Theology and University of Denver

Areas of specialization: religion and social change, critical whiteness studies, nonviolence theory and practice, religious and theological studies

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Rob Main: *Assistant Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 233 Phone: 436-2841 Email: rmain@wcupa.edu

B.A., University of Washington

M.A., Temple University

Ph.D., Temple University

Areas of specialization: American pragmatism, philosophy of culture, philosophy of art

Jea Sophia Oh: *Assistant Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 225 Phone: 436-2841 Email: joh@wcupa.edu

B.A., Ewha Women's University, Seoul, Korea

M.A., Ewha Women's University, Seoul, Korea and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, TX

STM, Yale Divinity School

Ph.D., Drew University

Areas of specialization: comparative theology, comparative ethics, post-colonial studies, cross-cultural studies, religion and ecology, feminist philosophies

Ronke Òké: *Assistant Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 227

Phone: 436-2841

Email: roke@wcupa.edu

BA, Spelman College

MA, University of Memphis

Ph.D. Penn State University

Areas of specialization: critical philosophy of race, Africana philosophy, existentialism & phenomenology (Fanon, Levinas & Sartre), social & political philosophy

Matthew Pierlott: Chair, *Associate Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 220A

Phone: 610-436-1004

Email: mpierlott@wcupa.edu

B.A., University of Scranton

Ph.D., Marquette University

Areas of specialization: philosophy of freedom, business ethics

Ruth Porritt: *Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 222

Phone: 430-2841

Email: rporritt@wcupa.edu

B.A., John Carroll University

M.A., Purdue University

Ph.D., Purdue University

Areas of specialization: aesthetics, literary theory, feminist thought

Helen Daley Schroepfer: *Associate Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 224

Phone: 436-2841

Email: hschroepfer@wcupa.edu

B.A., College of St. Benedict

M.A., Ecumenical Institute, St. Mary's Seminary

Ph.D., Temple University

Areas of specialization: philosophy of religion, religion and ethics, contemporary continental thought

Cassie Striblen: *Associate Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 229 Phone: 436-2841 Email: cstriblen@wcupa.edu

B.A., Ohio University
Ph.D., University of Cincinnati

Areas of specialization: ethics, social and political philosophy, moral psychology, feminist philosophy

I. Larry Udell: *Associate Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 230 Phone: 436-2789 Email: iudell@wcupa.edu

B.A., Ohio State University
M.A., Ohio State University
Ph.D., Ohio State University

Areas of specialization: social and political philosophy, philosophy of the social sciences, philosophy of economics, philosophy of law

Joan Woolfrey: *Professor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 223 Phone: 436-0731 Email: jwoolfrey@wcupa.edu

B.S., North Dakota State University;
M.A., New School for Social Research;
Ph.D., University of Oregon

Areas of specialization: ethical theory, bioethics, feminist thought, environmental philosophy

Our expert adjunct pool is a vital part of our department's ability to provide quality course offerings in this period of back-to-back retirements and occasional state-mandated hiring freezes and budget cuts. While this pool changes every term (see our website for the current full cadre) and primarily serves our undergraduates, several of our adjuncts return term after term, often with specializations and expertise that qualify them for teaching particular graduate courses. Those teaching full-time for us this coming year:

Ed Pollitt: *Adjunct Instructor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 234

Phone: 436-2841

Email: epollitt@wcupa.edu

B.A., Rutgers University

M.A., West Chester University

Areas of specialization: ethics and animal ethics

Paul Harris: *Adjunct Instructor*

Office: Anderson Hall, Rm. 234

Phone: 436-2841

Email: pharris@wcupa.edu

B.A., University of Hertfordshire (UK)

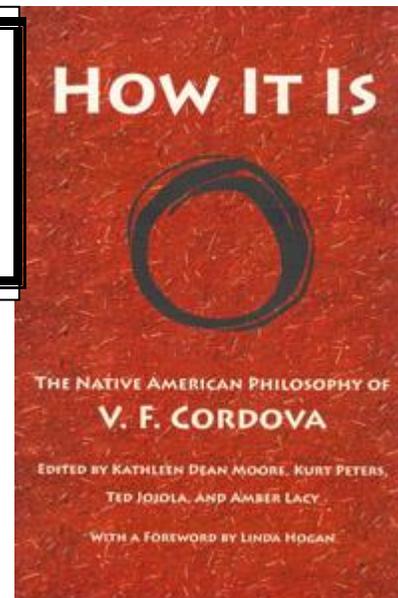
M.A., University of Essex (UK)

Areas of specialization: existentialism, continental philosophy

Departmental Secretary

Our departmental secretary is Mrs. Rose Sykes. Her office is located in Anderson Hall, Room 220. She has worked at the University for many years in different capacities, and has been with the Philosophy Department since October 2007. She quickly became the heart of the department. She is responsible for processing student paperwork and updating student files. Because of her experience in numerous facets of university life, she is a terrific resource for us all. Don't hesitate to contact Rose at 610-436-2841 or rsykes@wcupa.edu.

Viola Cordova (1937 - 2002) The first Native American to receive a Ph.D. in Philosophy (1994), she taught Environmental Ethics at Idaho State University and worked to dispel the presumption that non-Western philosophy lacked sophistication.



*John Rawls (1921 - 2002) published *A Theory of Justice* in 1971. Rawls revitalized the field of political philosophy as no one had since Plato.*



Part 4: Completing the Requirements

Information Resources

Official on-line WCU documents can be found here (hard copies are also available): <http://www.wcupa.edu/INFORMATION/OFFICIAL.DOCUMENTS/>. Make a habit of looking it up yourself because, as the Registrar will tell you, it's all ultimately up to you!

WCU's *Undergraduate Catalog*, published every other year, can be found online at <http://wcupa.edu/INFORMATION/OFFICIAL.DOCUMENTS/Undergrad.Catalog/>

Use this resource for information about general education requirements, special programs and services available to all students, academic policies and procedures, admissions questions, descriptions of course offerings and departments and programs campus-wide, and much, much more.

The Ram's Eye View, which contains information about the library, the bookstore, academic computing, the Learning Assistance and Resource Center, the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Counseling Services, Financial Aid, Greek Life and Student Organizations, Health Services and Insurance info, Counseling and Psychological Services—everything you can think of—can be found here <http://www.wcupa.edu/services/stu/ramsEyeView/policies.aspx/>.

Bookstore Is located in the lower level of the Sykes Student Union Building.

Library Instruction If you would like to learn more about the philosophy collection at the Francis Harvey Greene library and/or improve your research skills, you can schedule an individual library orientation with Rachel McMullin. Her office is located in the library, Room 209. She can also be contacted at 610-738-0510 or at rmcmullin@wcupa.edu.

Scheduling Courses

You schedule your courses on-line at www.wcupa.edu. Prior to being able to schedule, you must contact your advisor or department chair to discuss your courses and to have your “scheduling flag removed.” Discussing your academic progress with your advisor is prudent and can be helpful in making long-ranging plans.

Students are permitted to schedule based on their completed credits and their priority scheduling status. Student with disabilities (declared through the Office of Student Services), athletes and students studying abroad are eligible for priority scheduling. You may schedule during your “enrollment appointment” and after. But, don't wait until the last minute. Many courses fill up fast. Philosophy, like many other departments, gives priority to our majors. If you're in need of a closed course to complete your major (or minor), let your advisor know.

Tips for Choosing Classes

There are many reasons to choose courses each semester. In general, you can use the following list to assist you in choosing: First, are your General Education Requirements finished? Major Requirements? Minor Requirements? Electives? This is a good order for completing your degree successfully. Often, the courses required within the major are not offered every term. Be aware which terms courses are offered (check with the department or your advisor) so you can complete them in a timely manner.

Auditing a Class

Any student enrolled at WCU can audit a course—with instructor permission. For specifics, refer to your Undergraduate Catalog. *Auditing a course will not result in any credit. You may not request credit at any time for an audited course.* But you will be paying for the course. Reasons for auditing: general interest and too many other demanding courses; already full-time but innate curiosity, etc.

Balancing Schoolwork and Other Commitments

Plan your week by setting priorities and goals. Careful planning opens up surprising possibilities for entertainment and relaxation. Knowing when you concentrate the best can help you develop good study habits. Morning or evening? Keeping active and eating well will also help. Develop support networks. An important part of the college experience is the friendships you make—many are life long. But also know when to say no. Real friends won't abandon you if sometimes you have to study rather than socialize. Tackle problems early. Don't wait until the end of the term to talk to your professors about any difficulties you may be having with your class work. The time to seek help is the minute you begin to struggle. The night before the final exam is WAY too late! Build in time to relax. Reward yourself for hard work.

Reading Philosophical Texts

A helpful resource for thinking about reading by Garth Kemmerling from Newberry College (SC) can be found here: <http://www.philosophypages.com/sy.htm#rea>. For other links, also see Appendix A in this document.

Key points to keep in mind: You can't read philosophy quickly. 1) Preview/skim the entire selection for a "big picture" overview of the topic, structure, etc. 2) Then, begin again. Read slowly and carefully, identifying key concepts, as well as parts that are confusing. 3) Re-read after lecture/discussion. Check to see if confusing parts are clearer.

It may also be helpful to note that even seasoned readers of philosophy have to work at understanding what they read. We all stay alert for the key points. We take notes. Philosophical text can be very dense, but what often looks like mere repetition, on closer inspection, is usually building on what has come before. Don't skim when you think it sounds familiar—be alert to what's new.

Writing Philosophy Papers

An excellent resource for philosophical writing comes out of the Philosophy Department at Oregon State University where Dr. Woolfrey was once an adjunct. Here's the link:

http://oregonstate.edu/cla/philosophy/sites/default/files/pdf/WRITING_GUIDE.pdf

Our Graduate Assistants can help (see below), as well as the staff at the WCU Writing Center (<http://www.wcupa.edu/academics/writingcenter/>).

See other links in Appendix A (p. 40).

Turnitin.com Many of the philosophy faculty require that students submit their essays through Turnitin, an online program available through Desire2Learn (D2L; which replaced Blackboard in the summer of 2010). Turnitin verifies that the essays are original work and thereby protects students from having their work used by others. It is able to compare submitted work with internet sources, journals, and other papers submitted to Turnitin at WCU and other colleges and universities. It is used not only to deter plagiarism, but also to teach originality and proper use of references. Students who submit papers through Turnitin retain all rights to their work, and Turnitin actually protects those rights against unauthorized use. Turnitin scores are not used to calculate grades, but only to verify that students' work is original.

Tutoring Services

The hours change every term for our in-house tutors (the Department G.A.'s), but they are posted outside the philosophy department office, and flyers contain contact information.

We can also recruit tutors from amongst our ranks, matching them with students seeking help. WCU's Learning Assistance and Resource Center (LARC) also usually has philosophy tutors available. Visit them at 223 Lawrence Center. Whether you'd like to work as a tutor or with one, contact Matthew Pierlott (mpierlott@wcupa.edu)

Links to Philosophical Encyclopedias and Dictionaries

Some of the most useful philosophical links on the web:

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

A work-in-progress: Women Philosophers: <http://www.women-philosophers.com/>

African Philosophy resources: <http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/afphil/afamres.htm>

American Philosophical Association: <http://www.apaonline.org/>

Part 5: Getting Involved

Campus Groups

West Chester University Philosophical Society

The West Chester University Philosophical Society is composed of West Chester students who wish to further their interests in philosophical writings, topics, and discourse. The Society is student run and operated, and is comprised of philosophy and religious studies majors, minors and other interested students. Group activities have included discussions, trips to museums and conferences, and films. The faculty enjoy these outings, and hope for more in the future.

The Society also hopes to provide help with philosophical and academic questions and problems. Meetings are open to the public. Officers are elected annually. Keep an eye open for events and initiatives as the 2019-20 academic year gets underway. Elections for officers of the Club will take place in the fall.

Annual Graduate Student Conference

The 32th Annual WCUPS Graduate Student Philosophy Conference will be held in Spring of 2020. There will be a small registration fee. We welcome and encourage the submission of any graduate or undergraduate student paper dealing with a topic in philosophy or religion. Reading length should be no more than 20 minutes (typically, 2400 words). For more information, please inquire in the department office.

Philosophy Forum

The WCU Philosophy Forum supports the department's scholarly pursuits. It allows faculty members from WCU and elsewhere to share their ideas in a casual and enriching environment. Watch for emails encouraging your attendance.

Undergraduate Philosophy Journals and Conferences

There are a growing number of undergraduate philosophy and interdisciplinary journals today. These are venues for getting your philosophical sea-legs, and testing new ideas. Talk to your professors and your peers about papers you're interested in submitting. Think of every paper you write as an opportunity to see yourself in print. On-line resources:

Janua Sophia: PASSHE's own undergraduate philosophy journal, housed at Edinboro University of PA: http://www.edinboro.edu/departments/philosophy/janua_sophia.dot

Here is a website for a fairly comprehensive list of undergraduate philosophy journals: <http://www.luther.edu/philosophy/students/journals/>.

Discussion Groups

Over the years, a number of discussion groups, formal and informal, have developed with ties to the Philosophy Department. Discussions have centered on a single philosophical work, a particular philosopher, a movement, or a sub-discipline. If you'd like to start a group, or add your existing group to the department offerings, please contact our faculty advisor Dr. Matt Pierlott.

Departmental Activities

Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium

The Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium (GPPC) is a cooperative effort of 12 leading colleges and universities in the Philadelphia area. Conferences of the consortium are regularly scheduled for the West Chester campus and bring speakers of international repute, as well as students and faculty from other schools in the consortium, to the campus. All philosophy majors and graduate students have the opportunity to participate in consortium discussions, forums, contests, and other activities. You can learn more about the GPPC and view their calendar of upcoming events at <http://www.udel.edu/GPPC/>.

Phi Sigma Tau

The West Chester University chapter of Phi Sigma Tau, the international honor society in philosophy, sponsors a ceremony inducting new members into the society every other year. Induction is dependent on GPA, degree status, and recommendation by the local chapter advisor. The next ceremony will be in the fall of 2019, and you will be notified by the department if you qualify.

Undergraduate students are eligible for active membership if they have completed three semesters or five quarters of their college coursework, rank in the upper thirty-five percent of their class, and have completed at least two semester courses in philosophy with an average grade above a 3.0.

Graduate students are eligible if they meet the requirements established for undergraduates, or if they have completed at least one-third of the requirements of the master's degree with an average grade of at least a B+.

Other Guest Speakers

The Department of Philosophy also presents other nationally known philosophers. Recent visitors over the years have included:

- Dr. John Wall from Rutgers University in Camden who spoke on the concept of children's rights.
- Dr. Paul Taylor, Associate Professor of Philosophy and African American Studies and Head of the Department of African American Studies, Penn State
- Dr. Sally Scholz, past editor of *Hypatia*, the leading feminist philosophy journal, from Villanova participated in our 50th Anniversary events
- Dr. Joseph Margolis from Temple University who spoke on the notion of "robust relativism."
- Dr. Gordon Marino, an internationally recognized Kierkegaard Scholar
- Dr. Sarah Clark Miller, Director of Penn State's Rock Ethics Institute
- Dr. Robert Bernasconi, renowned Levinas Scholar
- Dr. Arnold Farr on the "Ongoing Relevance of Herbert Marcuse"

PA Interdisciplinary Association for Philosophy and Religious Studies

The PA IAPRS was founded over 20 years ago to support and encourage the study of philosophy and religion among the students and faculty of the state system schools. Annually in the spring, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's IAPRS holds a conference at one of the 14 State System schools. Advanced undergraduate and graduate students representing WCU frequently attend and present papers at IAPRS conferences. The atmosphere is typically supportive, casual and fun. Visit the IAPRS website at <http://www.sshe-iaprs.org/index.html> for more information.

Middle Atlantic Region Association for Asian Studies

Students and faculty representing WCU have also presented papers at the MAR-AAS conferences at various universities in the area. Visit the website at http://www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/regions/Mid-Atlantic/call.asp for updated information sometime in the fall.

Links to Other Local Event Listings

Villanova: <http://www.villanova.edu/artsci/philosophy/>

University of Delaware: www.udel.edu/Philosophy/content/events/events.htm

Penn: www.phil.upenn.edu/colloquia/

Temple: www.temple.edu/philosophy/ne_Events.html

Grants and Prizes

The Claghorn Award

This annual award is intended to reward progress and promise in the study of philosophy at West Chester. It will be granted normally to a graduate student, but may occasionally go to an undergraduate of particular promise. This monetary prize will vary depending on funding and contributions to the Claghorn fund, but will be several hundred dollars. The recipient is chosen by department committee, and will be named during the spring term.

The Streveler Research Award

This annual award goes to the best paper as judged by a committee of philosophy faculty. The paper must be submitted by the student who must be a current philosophy major or minor, and the paper must have been written for a West Chester University course. Watch for the announcement in February.

The Tournier Ethics Research Award

This annual award is open to all undergraduate student and the prize goes to the best paper as judged by a committee of philosophy faculty. Students may submit papers in Applied Ethics, including Medical Ethics, Bioethics, Professional Ethics, Environmental Ethics, Animal Ethics, etc. Look for the announcement in February.

Part 6: Moving On

Twardowski Career Development Center

The staff of the Twardowski Career Development Center in 225 Lawrence Center assists students in defining career goals, relating academic preparation to these goals, and helping in the search for internships and career opportunities. These services are available throughout the entire calendar year in the Lawrence Center, second floor, via one-on-one appointments and group workshops. A career information library is available for browsing and research; graduate school reference material is also maintained for students considering additional education. Other activities of the Twardowski Career Development Center include seminars, on-campus interviews and career fairs with potential employers, resume critiques, resume referral, and a web-based job posting system called College Central Network.

Philosophy Department Career Workshop

In the spring, the department will sponsor an undergraduate Career Planning workshop. Watch for more details.

Applying to Graduate Programs

Thinking about graduate school? Get a feel for what would be required of you by talking to any of your professors. Different schools have different expectations, but letters of recommendation are always required. Get to know your professors so they will get to know you. Knowing you personally will allow them to put extra effort into a letter recommending you for graduate work. But remember: If your GPA isn't at least 3.0 in your major, your chances of being accepted are slim.

Faculty members are available to assist you with the daunting task of selecting and applying to graduate schools. You are encouraged to ask those who know your work best for guidance and advice. But you should also do plenty of research yourself. Start with *Peterson's Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*. It's in the reference section of the Frances Greene Library under call number 378.1553 P485 2009 V. 3. You can also check out the *Philosophical Gourmet Report*, a website maintained by Texas A&M professor Dr. Brian Leiter:

<http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/applyingto.asp>. Although, we recommend you use it with caution. It is heavily slanted towards the analytic side of philosophy and does not always give Applied or Continental Philosophy its due.

Also, peruse the *Directory of American Philosophers* for those schools with areas of interest similar to your own. The Philosophy Department has its own copy. See Rose or Dr. Woolfrey to have a look.

The following is a set of tips for completing applications:[§]

- Carefully type all information in the application. Proofread. Have someone else proofread. Quadruple check everything.
- Request all needed materials very early. Aim to have all of your materials to the schools four weeks prior to the deadline to give yourself time to fix any mix ups.
- Have a second and third pair of eyes review your C.V. (resume) and other materials. A single typo can bias your application against you. Organization and neatness says more than you think about you. This is your future you are submitting. Show care and seek advice.
- Include a cover letter with your C.V. and application that highlights your education, experience, expertise, and interests. Try to keep it to one page.
- Remember to include the application fee with your materials.
- If the application isn't electronic, confirm, by phone and in e-mail if possible, with the schools that your application is complete prior to the deadline.
- You will need 3 (usually) letters of recommendations. Make sure you ask professors who know you well and are willing to write a strong letter. Ask them if they are comfortable writing a letter of recommendation for you and if they need any information from you to do so. Be prepared to provide
 - a transcript
 - a comprehensive vita (resume)
 - a copy of papers/exams—should be your best work
 - recommendation forms provided by the prospective schools
 - stamped, addressed envelopes to send the letters if application is not on-line

The Master's Program at WCU

We have offered the Master of Arts in Philosophy degree for over 45 years. This degree serves as a foundation for studies leading to a Ph.D. in philosophy or other disciplines, or prepares students for positions in industry, government or college teaching.

[§] taken from <http://www.bsu.edu/philosophy/article/0,1370,199229-13759-34218,00.html>

Also, see our description of the Accelerated BA/MA in Philosophy, under program requirements (p. 3), and more documentation coming soon!

Graduates of our program have earned Ph.D.'s in philosophy at Oxford, University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Michigan State, Duquesne University, University of Oregon and elsewhere. They have published articles in a variety of journals, including Asian Philosophy and Philosophy Today; and they have authored, contributed to and/or edited several books. Some students have gone on to teach primary or secondary school, and others have taught as adjunct professors at colleges and universities in the area and around the world. Among those places where our graduates have lectured are the University of Gdansk (Poland), the University of Alaska, the University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers University, Penn State, Widener, Villanova, and West Chester University. Graduates have also gotten tenured positions at Lancaster Bible College, York College, Rivier College (Nashua, NH), Western Florida University, South Texas Community College and Willa Julie College in Stevenson, Maryland. Those who chose non-academic careers have frequently entered law, social work, government, journalism or theological institutions. A few have started their own businesses.

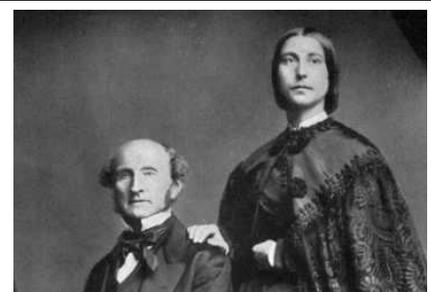
The master's degree at WCU requires a minimum of 30 credits. All candidates are required to take PHI 501---Proseminar, PHI 525—Epistemology, PHI 599—Philosophical Concepts and Systems, PHI 640—Seminar (on a particular figure in the history of philosophy). Beyond these requirements, the student has the choice of either the traditional or applied ethics track, and, with department approval, either the thesis or non-thesis program.

The standard track leading to the Master of Arts in Philosophy allows students to deepen their knowledge of the history of philosophy, major philosophers and major philosophical disciplines such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and aesthetics. The applied ethics track leading to the Master of Arts in Philosophy—Applied Ethics offers training in the theoretical justification and practical application of moral reasoning. Students pursuing this degree may choose to concentrate their courses in Business Ethics, Healthcare Ethics or a combination of both.

The thesis program requires 18 credits in philosophy; 6 credits of electives in philosophy or related fields; successful completion of a comprehensive exam on Metaphysics and Epistemology, and the thesis. Students first register for Thesis I (PHI600) which is intended to guide students through the early stages of writing a thesis, including drafting a formal proposal. Thesis II (PHI 610) is intended to guide students toward the completion and defense of their thesis. The non-thesis program requires 18 credits in philosophy; 12 credits of electives chosen from philosophy or related disciplines*; and two comprehensive exams in addition to Metaphysics and Epistemology.

*Students choosing both the applied ethics track and the non-thesis program may enroll (under advisement) in up to 12 credits of approved, focused electives offered by other departments. All other students are limited to 6 credits of electives taken outside of the Philosophy Department.

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), British Utilitarian Philosopher, served as member of Parliament. Wrote On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and many other works. Married Harriet Taylor—huge intellectual influence by his own account—in 1851.



Appendix A: Some Recommended Reading

Another couple of great pieces about *writing philosophy* are found on-line at: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html> and <http://bartleby.com/141/>.

Mastering the *informal fallacies* is a great way to get started on enhancing one's critical thinking skills: Try these on-line resources:

- <http://people.brandeis.edu/~teuber/studres.html>
- <http://www.nizkor.org/features/fallacies/>
- <http://www.fallacyfiles.org/inforfal.html>

Note: "ad hominem" fallacies are often now referred to as "abusive fallacies" as that label neutralizes the gendered implications of "ad hominem" ("attack on the man").

Speaking of the use of *gender neutral language*, try these sites:

<http://www.marquette.edu/wac/neutral/NeutralInclusiveLanguage.shtml> and <http://www.apaonline.org/?page=nonsexist>



Philosophy Club gathers at Longwood Gardens