

Handbook for IUP Philosophy Majors and Minors

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About Philosophy at IUP

The discipline of philosophy involves sustained, rigorous focus on some of the deepest questions human beings ask, questions about the nature of reality, thought and consciousness, the scope and limits of human knowledge, the value and essence of art, and the foundations of ethics and justice. Philosophy distinguishes itself by its methods: unpacking concepts, questioning beliefs, evaluating arguments, and examining the methods and assumptions of other disciplines, including natural science, social science, law, and fine arts. Interdisciplinary focus is inherent in philosophy, and most courses offered by the department are designed to be accessible to a broad range of students, not just those majoring in philosophy.

Students of philosophy learn to read carefully, think independently, communicate clearly, argue cogently, spot fallacies, clarify muddled reasoning, and identify questionable assumptions. Surveys show that such critical reasoning and analytical writing skills are those most sought by potential employers. Standardized exams for graduate, business, and law school test for such skills, and the data demonstrate that philosophy majors do extraordinarily well on them. Historically, according to Educational Testing Service data, philosophy majors outperform all other majors on both the Verbal Reasoning section and the Analytical Writing section of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE).

Two degree programs are available: a bachelor of arts degree with a major in philosophy and a bachelor of arts degree with a major in philosophy/pre-law. A minor in philosophy is also offered. The philosophy BA is best suited to students intending a broad education in philosophy. Some philosophy majors earn advanced degrees and pursue academic careers, but most pursue careers in law, medicine, public service, business, or information technology. The philosophy/pre-law track is designed for students intending to pursue an advanced degree in law and provides ideal training in the skills required for close, critical reading of legal texts, a fact borne out by law school admissions rates and LSAT performance data.

A significant number of students interested in exploring interdisciplinary connections choose philosophy as a second major, both for its flexibility and the new perspective it provides on the primary major.

The faculty of the IUP Department of Philosophy welcomes you to our programs!

Programs in Philosophy Offered at IUP

i. Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

Total Degree Requirements: **120 credits**

Philosophy Major (see below):	30 credits
College Foreign Language Requirement (see below):	0-12 credits
Liberal Studies Requirements (see below):	49-50 credits

Unless you declare a secondary major or a minor, the remainder of your 120 credits will be free electives.

ii. Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy Pre-Law

Total Degree Requirements: **120 credits**

Philosophy Major (see below):	30 credits
College Foreign Language Requirement (see below):	0-12 credits
Liberal Studies Requirements (see below):	49-50 credits
Pre-Law Interdisciplinary Track Requirements (see below):	15-21 credits

Unless you declare a secondary major or an additional minor (i.e., in addition to pre-law), the remainder of your 120 credits will be free electives.

***BA with Honors in Philosophy/Philosophy Pre-Law**

The BA with Honors requires, in addition to BA program requirements, completion of a two-semester, 6 credit, Honors Thesis Independent Study. These 6 credits count towards completion of program requirements in Philosophy and as 6 of the 120 credits required for graduation. To be considered for honors in philosophy, students must have earned at least 60 credits in total, with a minimum 3.25 cumulative GPA and a minimum 3.5 GPA in philosophy courses. The honors thesis is completed individually under the direction of a department professor who specializes in the student's area of interest and is approved by a thesis committee comprising the director and two other readers. Students completing the departmental honors program are recognized at departmental commencement ceremonies. The option is encouraged for students intending to pursue graduate or advanced professional degrees. Philosophy majors and philosophy/pre-law majors may be invited to apply or may nominate themselves.

Students interested in pursuing an Honors in Philosophy/Philosophy Pre-Law degree are invited to consult with the department's Honors Track coordinator, Dr. Eric Rubenstein.

iii. Minor in Philosophy

Six PHIL courses (with restrictions) (1, 2) **18 credits**

(1) No more than three 100- and 200-level courses may be counted toward the minor. Only PHIL courses may be counted toward the minor. Unless otherwise indicated in the Course Descriptions, all 300- and 400-level courses require either philosophy major or minor status, junior or senior standing, or permission of the instructor.

(2) No more than 3 non-classwork credits may be counted toward the minor. Non-classwork credits include independent study, independent honors project, and internship in philosophy.

Path through the BA in Philosophy/Philosophy Pre-Law

Each semester, in advance of registration for the coming semester, you'll meet with your advisor, a member of the Philosophy Department faculty, to plan course selection for the coming semester(s). Advising will be sensitive to individual students' preferences, but the following general maxims apply.

We recommend that you:

1. begin your studies in Philosophy by taking 100- and 200-level PHIL courses;
2. take PHIL 221 no later than your sophomore year;
3. take ENGL 101, and HIST 196/197/198, in your freshman year;
4. begin the College foreign language course sequence no later than your sophomore year;
5. begin the natural science requirement no later than your sophomore year;
6. choose social science classes that will broaden your horizons and suit your interests;

and, most importantly,

7. enroll in classes as soon as your registration window opens, which will require that you meet with your advisor in advance of your registration period.

Program Requirements in Detail

Philosophy Major:

30 credits

Required Courses: 9 credits

PHIL 221 Symbolic Logic I	___3
PHIL 324 Ancient Greek Philosophy	___3
PHIL 325 Early Modern Eur. Philosophy	___3

Controlled Electives: 21 credits

At least two courses from each of the following two categories:

Knowledge and Reality: 6 credits

PHIL 330 Philosophy of Science	___3
PHIL 350 The Human Experience of Time	___3
PHIL 360 Philosophy of Mind	___3
PHIL 390 Philosophy of Human Nature	___3
PHIL 420 Metaphysics	___3
PHIL 421 Theory of Knowledge	___3
PHIL 460 Philosophy of Language	___3

Ethics and Values: 6 credits

PHIL 223 Philosophy of Art	___3
PHIL 232 Philosophies of Love	___3
PHIL 240 Philosophy and the Good Life	___3
PHIL 270 Ethics and the Environment	___3
PHIL 320 Ethical Theory	___3
PHIL 323 Political Philosophy	___3
PHIL 326 Existentialism	___3
PHIL 450 Philosophy of Law	___3

An additional three PHIL courses (9 credits) (with restrictions) (a, b)

___3
___3
___3

- a. In addition to PHIL 221, no more than four 100 and 200 level courses may be counted toward the major. Only PHIL courses may be counted toward the major.
- b. No more than 9 non-classwork credits may be counted toward the major. Non-classwork credits include Independent Study, Independent Honors Project, and Internship in Philosophy.

Pre-Law Interdisciplinary Track (Pre-Law Majors Only):

21 credits

Seven courses, including at least one from each of six non-PHIL areas:

ACCT 201, ACCT 202, or BLAW 235	___3
CRIM 210, 215, 225, or 255	___3
ECON 121, 122, or 332	___3
ENGL 212, 227, 265, 310, or 321	___3
HIST 320, 341, 342, 346, or 475	___3
PLSC 358, 359, 361, or 405	___3
One additional Pre-law class:	___3
 PHIL 101, 122, 130, 221, 279, 320, or 450	___3

Pre-Law classes can also meet Liberal Studies requirements.

Academic Advising

All IUP philosophy majors are assigned an advisor who is a faculty member in the IUP Philosophy Department. The department chair can let you know who your advisor is, and you can also find this out on MyIUP. Your advisor will help you decide what classes to enroll in to ensure timely degree completion while building a complement of classes suited to your interests. Your advisor is also ready to help you troubleshoot on challenges with classes your taking, financial aid challenges, and any hitches and hurdles you'd like help with.

Midway through fall semesters, you will register for spring classes. Midway through spring semesters, you will register for classes in the upcoming fall semester. The chair will send you an email reminding to you schedule an appointment with your academic advisor, who will also send an email letting you know their available times. Please make a point of giving some thought to your options for classes in advance of your meeting with your advisor. This becomes easier the longer you've been here, as you get a sense for the programs at IUP and your own interests. We also ask that you make a point of enrolling in classes as soon as the registration windows allow, to ensure that you get the classes you really want, and to ensure that our philosophy classes fill with philosophy students. Once PHIL classes fill, no more seats are available. Philosophy majors and minors who register after sections fill may be able to get overrides into needed philosophy classes, if room capacity allows. If you find yourself needing a seat in a philosophy class that is already full, please contact the department chair, Mary MacLeod.

Internship Opportunities

IUP encourages undergraduates to pursue internship opportunities, working outside the university (typically without pay) for earned academic credits. Philosophy majors can earn up to 9 credits towards program completion by enrolling in 3 credit PHIL 493 (Internship in Philosophy) sections, completing internships with oversight by a philosophy faculty member.

The Washington Center has various internship opportunities in Washington DC, all somewhat political in nature. One of our recently graduated students did an internship through them two years ago during which he worked with a group advocating for greater respect of basic human rights in Pakistan. A representative from the Washington Center visits IUP each fall to hold an information session about internship opportunities with the Washington Center. You can expect an email about that soon.

There is a program that brings together local governments in Western PA, encouraging them to advertise internships in one central website (<http://localgovernmentacademy.org/interns-and-careers/mip/students-and-career/>). You might care to review options listed at that site.

We are also open to crafting other internship opportunities suited to your interests and abilities. Just let us know if you'd like help with that.

Students interested in pursuing internship opportunities are invited to consult with the Philosophy Department's internship coordinator, Dr. Hans Pedersen.

Philosophy Club

IUP has a student philosophy club, which tends to meet one evening each week to talk about philosophical topics and socialize. Philosophy professors attend meetings when invited, but really it's a club where students can try their wings without our tutelage. The club is under new leadership this year, but you can expect an email about dates and times soon.

Dan Boone Speaker Series

The department brings in visiting speakers several times during the academic year, philosophy professors from other institutions. The talks tend to last about one hour, and then there is an hour of discussion. Your professors attend, sometimes professors from other departments attend, and we are pleased and proud that many of our majors and minors attend, too. Please consider yourself very welcome to join us for talks in our speaker series. You'll receive emailed notices about upcoming talks as they are scheduled.

Start of the Year Party for Majors and Minors

Each year, in mid-September, once everyone is settled in, we hold a dinner party for majors and minors. Lately, we've had the party catered by Chipotle. There's lots of food, and it's a chance to meet other students in the program. Your professors attend and student turnout is always excellent. We hope you'll join us for that. Expect an email soon about the date and time.

Department Essay Contest

Every April, the Department invites submissions to its annual student essay contest. Three prizes are awarded: first prize (\$250), second prize (\$150), and third (\$100). Competition restricted to papers written for IUP philosophy courses. Papers must be typed, at least six double-spaced pages in length, and written in standard font with standard margins. Paper must be prepared for blind review by removing all identifying marks (including author's name), and by providing a detachable cover sheet with author's name, e-mail address, and the paper's title. All submissions must include a bibliography. Papers submitted during a previous competition cannot be submitted again.

Graduate School and Law School

Since some people with a philosophy major or minor go onto law school or graduate school, we want to address some of the questions you might have, and to give you information about what the process of applying to these schools involves, but first, understand that you need *not* have plans of entering either graduate school or law school to be a successful and happy philosophy student here. We don't expect that every philosophy major will go on to graduate school or law school, nor are the program requirements shaped by such expectations. The only requirement to be a philosophy major or minor is that you enjoy studying philosophy. The careers an undergraduate philosophy degree may prepare you for are diverse, including those that don't require graduate or law school.

If, however, your goal is philosophy graduate school or law school, there are a number of things you should keep in mind to help prepare you for the next stage in your education. Below you'll find advice for each of these options. Keep in mind that these are merely general guidelines. Also remember that this memo is no substitute for person-to-person discussions. We are all committed to advising any student who has interest in going to law school or grad school. So, don't hesitate to discuss these matters with faculty should you have any questions or want advice.

I. Law School

Should you desire to go to law school, there are a number of things that you should be aware of that will either be required of you or will at least help your application stand out.

a. Good grades are obviously a staple of a strong application. Other examples of academic achievement or excellence are also desirable.

b. The Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) will be required. Here you might consider taking an LSAT prep course or at least working with a study guide to prepare for the LSAT exam. There are prep books in the IUP Library. PHIL 221 (Symbolic Logic) is required of all majors, and it is good preparation for LSAT questions involving deductive reasoning.

c. Letters of recommendation. Below will be a discussion of this part of the process.

d. Service: Law schools often want to see examples of leadership. This can take many forms, and might include such things as: internships; club/organization activities; volunteer work; tutoring. These and other activities help give reviewers of your application a fuller sense of who you are as a person. Several of our philosophy pre-law majors have recently completed internships and law firms, and if you're interested in pursuing that option, please let us know. The department internship coordinator is Dr. Hans Pedersen.

e. Personal statement. These are often required in law school applications.

f. Law school applications are managed by the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC).

You'll need to sign up for LSAC service in your senior year.

II. Graduate Study in Philosophy

Should you desire to go to graduate school in philosophy, there are a number of things that you should be aware of that will either be required of you or will at least help your application stand out. (Note: there is obviously some overlap in the application process for both law and grad school. In section III we will talk more about some of the common requirements and things you should know.)

a. Good grades are obviously a staple of a strong application. Other examples of academic achievement or excellence are also desirable.

b. The Graduate Records Exam (GRE) will be required. You might consider taking a GRE prep course or at least buying a study guide to the GRE exam. There is no specialized Philosophy section or test to be taken.

c. Letters of recommendation. Below will be a discussion of this part of the process.

d. Writing Sample. This is a crucial part of the grad school application. Below will be a discussion of it.

e. Personal statement. These are often required in grad school applications.

III. Additional Matters

1. The Competition

There isn't an easy way to put the following: There are lots of smart people out there who want to go to graduate and/or law school. The competition can be pretty stiff. This includes both competition to get into grad school, as well as the competition for finding jobs after grad school. Unfortunately, there are many qualified PhDs looking for a relatively small number of teaching positions. So, you'll want to take all this into consideration as you work through your undergraduate career and as you consider post-IUP plans. Keep in mind, though, that there are lots of different kinds of programs and law schools.

For instance, even if your time at IUP proves a bit rocky, you can still work your way up the system: there are MA programs in philosophy that serve as feeders to PhD programs. Some may even be able to give you some funding. You *can* recover from an unexceptional performance at IUP through one of these and then get into a better PhD program that way.

2. Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are an essential part of your application, whether you are going to law or grad school. You should arrange to have at least three letters. To help professors write you the strongest letters they can, you should attend to the following important details:

a. Letters take a good bit of time to write. You should ask your professors well in advance of the deadline. You need to explicitly request it. The polite way is to ask your professors if they believe they are able to write a strong letter for you.

b. You need to do your part too. If you are applying to several schools, it is your job to make clear to your letter writers where you are applying. Be prepared, if asked, to provide your letter writers with supplementary materials, such as papers written for other classes, a personal statement, academic transcripts, etc.

3. Writing Sample: Philosophy Graduate School

A writing sample is one of the most important parts of your application. Schools will want to see how you write, how you think, and will want to get a sense of your philosophical interests and abilities. You are advised to plan well in advance how you want to address this part of the application process. Some schools may even want two samples. In general (and it really does vary from school to school), you'll want a polished piece of writing(s) with a total of 15-20 pages.

As an aside, you might keep in mind that service achievements typically don't count as much for grad school as they do for law school. Grad schools typically aren't interested in your leadership abilities or your extracurricular achievements. They want to see evidence of your philosophical talents and successes. That is why the writing sample is so important.

Students interested in continuing on to graduate studies in philosophy are well advised to earn admission to our department honors program. Students who graduate with honors in philosophy have completed a two semester independent study, doing intensive research and writing an honors thesis. For more on the honors program, see "Programs in Philosophy Offered at IUP" also in this information packet.

4. General Guidelines

a. Advice

The process of applying takes time. Don't leave matters until the last minute. The greatest danger of leaving things until the last minute is that your application will have the appearance of being rushed, and

will be likely to include mistakes and errors. Since the process is competitive, you don't want to sell yourself short or unnecessarily harm your application. Don't let years of good work go to waste with a hastily constructed application.

b. When should I start?

Let's assume, for simplicity, that you plan to graduate in May and start law/grad school in the fall. If so, then your applications for fall enrollment will typically be due in December or January of your senior year. Thus the fall semester of your senior year will be especially busy as you prepare your applications, take or retake the necessary exams, get letters of recommendation, etc. Keep this in mind as you plan your schedule for finishing your major/minor. You'll also want to keep this in mind if you need to get a writing sample prepared for submission with your application.

Before your senior year you'll want to have some sense of where you would like to apply. So, you might begin to gather information about various programs and universities, including sending letters or emails to presently enrolled graduate or law school students.

Unfortunately, the process isn't cheap. You'll have to pay for LSAT/GRE exams and application fees. Some students are eligible for fee waivers, so think about contacting someone at Financial Aid about that option.

c. Finally...

We hope our advice doesn't scare you off but instead gives you a realistic sense of what is involved in preparing for post-IUP education. Most important, don't be a stranger: ask questions, send us email, stop by our offices. Start early and get all the information you can.