Studying PHILOSOPHY at Central Michigan University: A Handbook for Students

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Studying Philosophy at CMU:
A handbook for students

Contents

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The cover photo is Franz Caucig's famous *Socrates with Students and Diotima*.

1 What is Philosophy?

The term "philosophy" comes from the Greek words for "love of wisdom." It is the subject that deals with some of the most persistent and difficult questions that people have ever asked: What is real? Do we have control over our own lives, or are we controlled by fate or chance? What does it mean to be human? Are our minds or souls independent of our bodies? Is there a God? Is there a purpose to the universe, or to human life? What is the nature of good and evil? How can we be sure that what we think we know is correct? Most people have pondered some or all of these questions at one time or another. But how would one even try to answer such questions without resorting to unsupported opinion? Dismissing questions like this as being too difficult to answer in a rational way is tempting.

Philosophy, however, has developed ways to think carefully and critically about these most difficult questions, and to do so without merely offering unsupported opinions or speculations about them. Instead, philosophy has developed a systematic and rational method to find answers that can be supported by strong reasons and arguments. For instance, in order to answer a question such as "what makes an action morally right?", a philosopher will look at several possible definitions of a morally right action (e.g., "a morally right action maximizes the happiness of everyone affected"; "a morally right action is whatever a culture deems to be morally right"; "a morally right action is one that we would want everyone to perform," and so on). The philosopher then critically evaluates these possible theories of morality, and thinks about the implications and consequences of accepting each of them. This method is similar to the kind of hypothesis–testing that scientists employ, except that there are no actual experiments. Instead, philosophers rely on careful thinking, thought experiments, and other techniques to test various possible answers to a philosophical problem or question.

Despite its grammatical form, then, it is perhaps more accurate to think of the term "philosophy" as a verb rather than a noun. Philosophy is not just a static set of beliefs that one has, but instead it is the activity of seeking the truth by employing a set of rational *tools and methods*. The philosopher is a lover of wisdom, and she puts this love of wisdom into practice by using rational methods to find the most reasonable answers to philosophical questions. There are several different branches of philosophy, each with its own set of questions. Here are some of them:

Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge): The task of epistemology is to address such questions as: What is knowledge? Is there a difference between knowledge and true opinion? What role, if any, do the senses play in the acquisition of knowledge? A central question in epistemology concerns the proper response to the kind of radical skepticism that results from doubting everything. Epistemology also seeks to develop sound methods for inquiry; methods that are the most likely to help us find the truth.

Moral Philosophy (Ethics): Moral philosophy addresses questions about the proper standards for judging the rightness or wrongness of actions, and the proper ideals for cultivating good character and living a good life. Such questions include: What kind of person should I be? How much does morality demand of me? Does the end justify the means, or are there some duties that one should obey regardless of the consequences? What makes an action or a person good or bad? A closely related area is called applied ethics. Its goal is to help us to decide what is moral in everyday situations or within the context of various activities like business, medicine, and government.

Logic: Logic is one of the most fundamental branches of philosophy. It deals with techniques for evaluating reasons and arguments. Many of these techniques are "mathematical" in nature: logic uses variables to represent the sentences in an argument in much the same way that algebra uses variables to represent numbers in an equation. Logic shows us how to manipulate those sentences in much the same way that algebra shows us how to manipulate mathematical equations. This allows us to determine which logical patterns (arguments) represent sound forms of reasoning. Since logic is very similar to mathematics, some students find mathematics less difficult after taking logic.

Metaphysics: Metaphysics is concerned with what there is. It is one of the more abstract branches of philosophy. In metaphysics, one asks such question as, "What sorts of things ultimately exist?" "Are minds composed of a kind of substance different from the substance from which physical bodies are composed?" "Is there one substance from which everything else is made?" "What is the nature of causality?" "When are two things identical to one another?" "What is the nature of time?" One goal of metaphysics is to develop an "ontology" which

is a list of the most basic things that exist and from which everything else is composed.

History of Philosophy: The history of philosophy is devoted to studying the thoughts and writings of the philosophers of the past. Instead of focusing just on metaphysics or epistemology, historians of philosophy typically study what a given philosopher thought about many different areas of philosophy. Thus, historians of philosophy often investigate how past philosophers drew connections between the various areas of philosophy.

Philosophy of _____: Philosophy often has much to say about the methods and fundamental assumptions of other subjects and disciplines. Such topics would fall under the "philosophy of" that discipline. For example, there is philosophy of science, philosophy of law, philosophy of art, philosophy of literature, philosophy of history, philosophy of psychology, and so on.

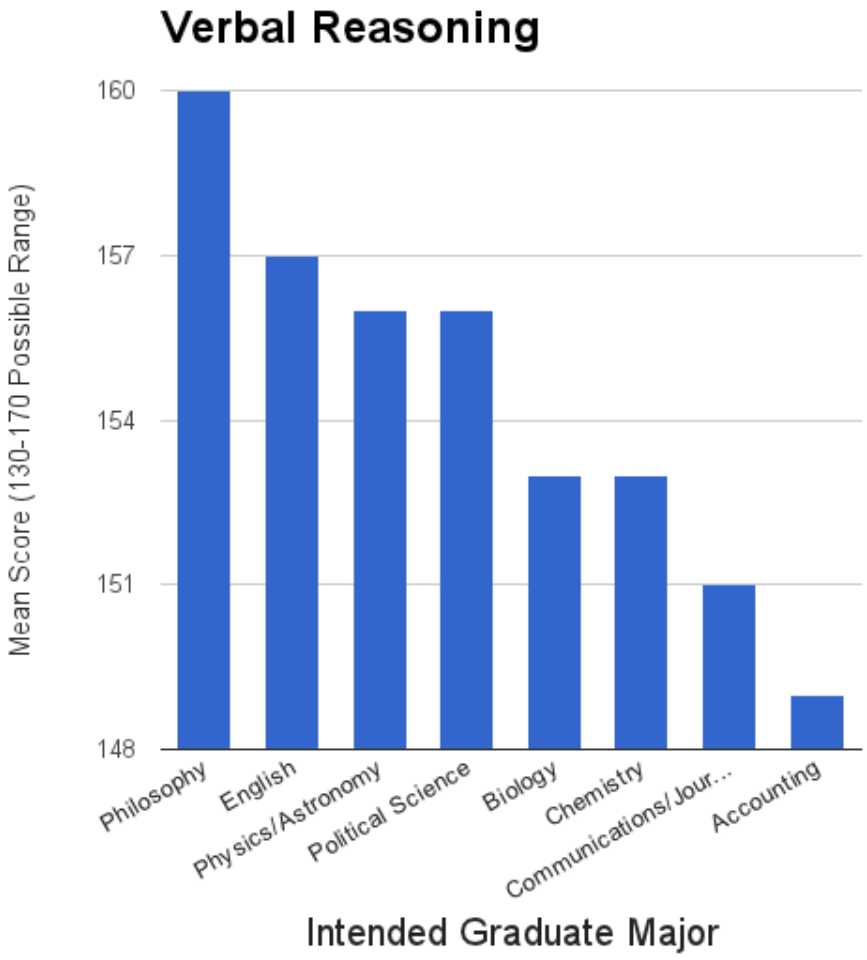
2 Benefits of Studying Philosophy

Contrary to the stereotype of philosophy as an impractical discipline, the skills and techniques that philosophy teaches are extremely useful. The same skills and techniques used to address philosophical questions and solve philosophical problems can also be used to answer practical questions and solve real-world problems.

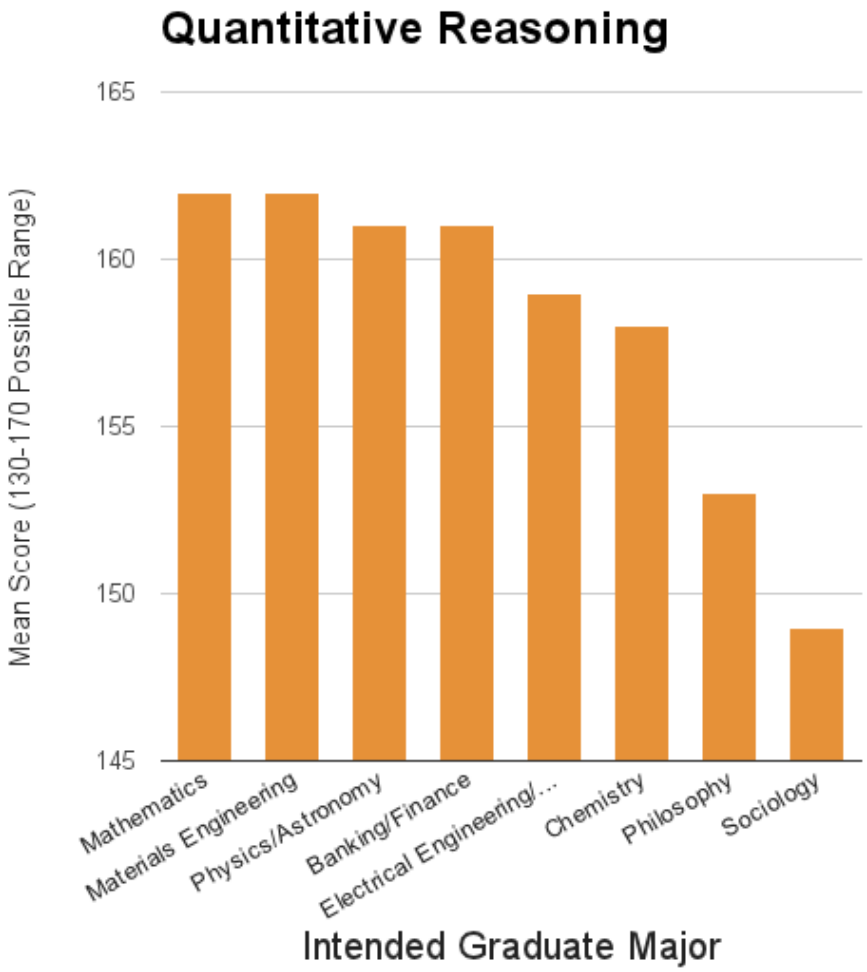
Studying philosophy improves the student's ability to think clearly, carefully, and logically about a wide variety of topics. It helps to develop the student's ability to assimilate and assess new and unfamiliar ideas and information. It teaches sound reasoning methods and problem solving strategies that work in all sorts of contexts, including new and unfamiliar ones.

Philosophy also teaches students to think creatively and to question conventional wisdom. It encourages students both to seek new and better answers to old problems, and to consider how existing techniques might be adapted to solve new problems. Philosophy is the ultimate training for "thinking outside the box." The following charts illustrate these claims by showing how students majoring in Philosophy compare to those majoring in other fields on the Quantitative Reasoning and Verbal Reasoning sections of

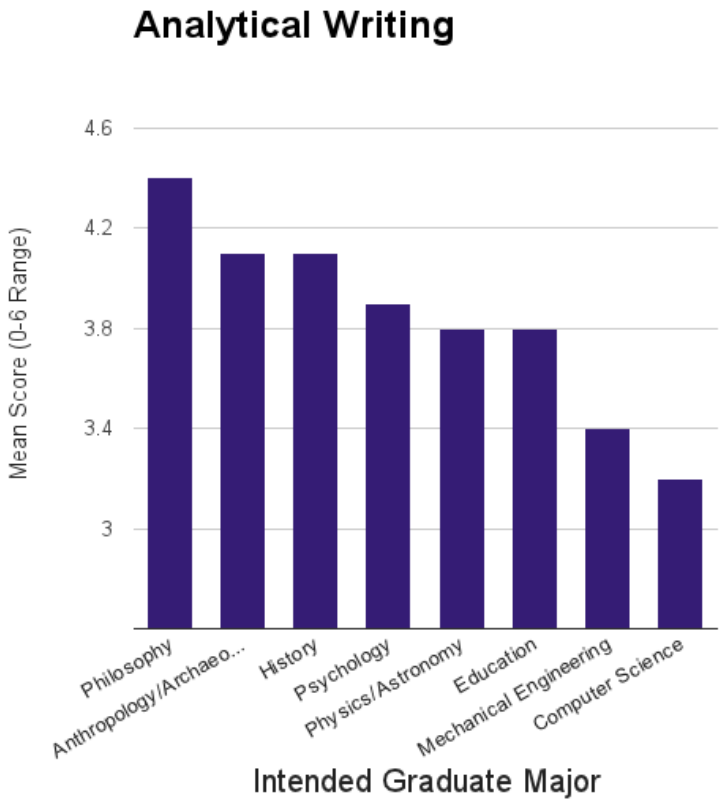
the Graduate Record Exam (GRE).[1]



[1]These graphs were compiled by www.physicscentral.com and can be found here: http://physicsbuzz.physicscentral.com/2014/08/best-gre-scores-by-major-2014-edition.html. The data they used came from Education Testing Service, and can be found here: http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide_table4.pdf.


Quantitative Reasoning
165
160
155
150
145
Mean Score (130-170 Possible Range)
Mathematics
Materials Engineering
Physics/Astronomy
Banking/Finance
Electrical Engineering/...
Chemistry
Philosophy
Sociology
Intended Graduate Major

The study of philosophy also develops the student's communication skills. It helps the student learn to formulate and express her ideas with clarity and precision. In fact, philosophy teaches a critical, careful approach to writing that rivals poetry and literature in its commitment to expressing subtle ideas carefully and precisely. In addition, philosophical writing helps the student master the techniques of argument and persuasion. Finally, the study of philosophy develops the student's ability to understand and interpret complex texts. The graph below illustrates how well Philosophy majors do compared to other majors on the Analytical Writing section of the GRE.[2]



[2]This graph, too, was compiled by www.physicscentral.com and can be found here: http://physicsbuzz.physicscentral.com/2014/08/best-gre-scores-by-major-2014-edition.html. The data they used came from Education Testing Service, and can be found here: http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide_table4.pdf.

Like other liberal arts degrees, a philosophy degree does not involve training for a specific job; instead, it involves the acquisition of sophisticated critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills that will be useful for whatever career one chooses.[3] These skills are in high demand in today's society, where success very often depends on one's ability to think carefully about changing conditions, to solve new problems, and to communicate effectively and persuasively. (See Section 8 below for more information on career options for philosophy students, and the benefits of studying philosophy for those options.)

3 The Philosophy Program at CMU

CMU boasts a strong program in philosophy. Currently, the Philosophy Program at CMU consists of eight tenure–track faculty and four full–time non–tenure–track faculty. Many of the philosophy faculty have been honored with CMU's highest awards for teaching, research, and service to the university. (At last count, two members of the Philosophy faculty have won CMU's top award for teaching, and three have won its top awards for research.)

The highest priority of the CMU philosophy program is to provide high–quality undergraduate education in philosophy, both for philosophy majors and minors, and as a part of the general education of students in the University Program. All of the philosophy faculty are extremely dedicated instructors, and are committed to providing a challenging education and to helping students meet the high academic standards that they set. Some of the faculty members have achieved formal recognition as being among the very best instructors at CMU.

Members of the philosophy faculty do not just teach philosophy, however; they also do philosophy. They contribute to ongoing processes of philosophical research and scholarship directed toward improving our understanding of philosophical issues, questions, and texts. As a group, the CMU philosophy faculty has an impressive record of scholarship and research. Faculty members often present their work at philosophical conferences and publish it in scholarly journals. Faculty members have edited anthologies and written books setting out the results of their research. Several members have achieved impressive individual records of scholarly achievement, and a cou-

[3]For a sophisticated, but accessible, defense of this line of thinking, see http://www.academia.edu/2454947/Liberal_Arts_and_the_Advantages_of_Being_Useless

ple have built national and even international reputations for their research and scholarship.

The members of the philosophy faculty also play vital roles in the academic administration of the university. They are especially active in defending academic values such as raising academic standards, maintaining free and open inquiry, encouraging civil and tolerant debate, and encouraging the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom as goods in themselves. Members of the philosophy faculty participate actively in faculty governance and oversight of the University and its activities, programs, and policies.

The major strengths of CMU's philosophy program are in the history of philosophy (especially ancient Greek, early modern, and 20th century analytic philosophy),value theory (including ethical theory, applied ethics, and aesthetics), and the philosophy of mind. Like most philosophy departments in the English speaking world, CMU's philosophy program is oriented mainly toward the Anglo American "analytic" tradition in philosophy and the history upon which that tradition draws. However, the faculty are interested in broadening our outlook to include Asian and Continental philosophy, and we have been increasing our course offerings in these areas.

In 1999, the philosophy faculty, with the support of the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences, established an "Ethics Center". The Center for International Ethics sponsors innovative educational activities focused on universal values and virtues - and the international framework that seeks to make these values come alive.

In addition to organizing events on campus such as ?Global Ethics Day?, ?Human Rights Month,? and the raising of the Peace Flag in front of Warriner Hall, The Center works with a number of international partners–in both Europe and Asia–which offer educational and internship opportunities for CMU students. For example, students can participate in a study abroad experience in The Hague, The Netherlands focused on the International Criminal Court and the history of Public International Law. As part of this class, students help to organize and attend the annual "Forward Into Light? Bertha von Suttner Master Class, that the Center has organized with the Peace Palace Library since 2014. The Center also offers experiences in South Korea, such as the No Gun Ri Peace Academy, which deepen the student?s understanding of 'atrocity crimes,? international ethics, and peace history. CMU students have interned in both The Hague and in South Korea. Our programs help CMU to achieve its mission of providing education that fosters personal and intellectual growth that prepares students for

meaningful lives and responsible citizenship in a global society.

The Director of the Center is Hope Elizabeth May. Dr. Andrew Blom, Dr. Kelly Murphy, and Dr. Laurel Zwissler (all of whom are members of CMU?s Department of Philosophy and Religion) are members of the Center?s Advisory Board.

Since 1999, the Philosophy Program has been part of the Department of Philosophy and Religion. However, philosophy and the scholarly study of religion are quite different academic disciplines. For this reason, the philosophy program and the religious studies program maintain their status as independent academic programs within a single department. Faculty with advanced degrees in philosophy teach all of the philosophy courses and oversee the philosophy curriculum.

The philosophy program is headed either by the Chairperson of the Department of Philosophy and Religion (when that person is a member of the philosophy area), or by an Area Coordinator (when the Chair of the Department is a member of the religion program). The current head of the philosophy program (and Chair of the Department) is Dr. Robert Noggle.

The main office of the Department of Philosophy and Religion is on the second floor of Anspach Hall, and the main phone number is (989) 774 3444. The philosophy program's website is located at http://www.cmich.edu/academics/humanities_social_behavioral_sciences/CHSBSDepartments/CHSBSPhilosophyandReligion/philosophy/Pages/default.aspx. Section 9 contains contact and other information for individual faculty.

4 Requirements for Philosophy Majors and Minors

Students who wish to pursue a systematic study of philosophy have several options at CMU. They may choose philosophy as a major, a second major, or a minor.

The philosophy major is designed to give students a grounding in the most important areas of philosophy, while allowing enough flexibility for the student to pursue her/his own particular philosophical interests.

The philosophy major is also designed to be attractive as a second major. Taking a second major in philosophy can be a very practical way for students with a non-philosophy major to incorporate a serious study of phi-

losophy into their education. In fact, philosophy is one of the very best second majors. A serious study of philosophy builds skills which complement any major and which will enhance any career. These skills include clear and precise writing, critical and creative thinking, abstract reasoning, and logical problem-solving. All things being equal, the person who has these skills will always have an advantage over the person who does not. These skills make a powerful addition to training in other fields. The philosophy major has been designed to be flexible enough to serve as a second major for almost any student who wants to combine a thorough study of philosophy with training in another field.

Students who are interested in philosophy but who cannot or do not wish to complete an entire philosophy major may find that a minor in philosophy suits their needs. The philosophy minor is extremely flexible and can be incorporated into almost any student's education.

Requirements for Philosophy Major:

Total: 33 Semester Hours

Required Courses (21 hours)

PHL 100 Introduction to Philosophy (3)

PHL 140 Introduction to Logic (3)

PHL 200 History of Philosophy: Classical Period (3)

PHL 218 Ethical Theory (3)

PHL 302 History of Philosophy: Modern Period (3)

PHL 320 Theory of Knowledge (3) *OR* **PHL 404** History of Philosophy: Contemporary Period (3)

PHL 490 Senior Seminar (3)

Electives (12 hours)

At least *six hours* must be chosen from the following

PHL 225 Foundations of Cognitive Science (3)

PHL 325 Philosophy of Mind (3)

PHL 340 Intermediate Logic (3)

PHL 390 Philosophy of Science (3)

PHL 405 Major Philosophers (3)

PHL 410 Philosophy of Law (3)

PHL 418 Advanced Moral PHilosophy (3)

PHL 422 Social and Political Philosophy (3)

PHL 426 Feminist Theory (3)

PHL 480 Philosophy of the Arts (3)

NOTE: Philosophy courses taken on a Credit/No Credit basis *may not* be applied toward a philosophy major.

Important Information for Philosophy Majors:

Students are responsible for ensuring that course requirements are met in a timely manner. Section 6 articulates the Philosophy program's plan for making this possible.

1. Students wishing to declare a philosophy major should meet with a faculty member to plan a course of study and complete the necessary paperwork.

2. Students are encouraged to take PHL 100 and 140 as early as possible.

3. Philosophy majors who are planning to go to graduate school in philosophy are encouraged to take PHL 200 (Ancient Greek Philosophy), PHL 302 (Early Modern Philosophy), and PHL 340 (Intermediate Logic). In addition, you are strongly advised to follow the Graduate School Track in selecting your remaining courses (see below).

4. Traditionally, philosophy majors pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree. CMU, however, is one of the few universities that allow philosophy majors to earn the less challenging B.S. degree. In most cases, the faculty recommends that philosophy students pursue the more substantial B.A. degree. This is especially important for students with a single major in philosophy, and for students who are considering graduate school in philosophy. The B.A. degree ensures that students have the kind of broad and challenging education that philosophy majors should be seeking. (We understand, of course, that students who are taking philosophy as a second major, and who do not plan to go to graduate school, may need to take the B.S. degree in order to finish on time.)

Requirements for Philosophy Minor:

A minor in philosophy consists of 20 credit hours in philosophy. Philosophy courses taken on a Credit/No Credit basis *may* be applied toward a philosophy minor.

The specific courses should be selected to fit the individual needs and interests of the student. Students interested in pursuing a minor in philosophy are encouraged to consult a faculty advisor for advice about what courses will

best suit their interests and complement their other studies. Students taking a minor in philosophy are also encouraged to consult the tracks discussed in the next section for advice about the kinds of courses that will best fit their needs and interests.

5 Designing a Course of Study: Philosophy Tracks

The requirements for the philosophy major and minor are meant to be flexible, since students study philosophy for a wide variety of reasons. However, in order to give students more specific advice about how to tailor their study of philosophy to their own particular interests and plans, the philosophy curriculum committee has devised a series of philosophy concentrations or "tracks." These tracks are NOT requirements, but rather recommendations. They represent the faculty's best advice about the kinds of courses that are most likely to meet the student's specific needs, interests, and career goals.

Students who are taking a minor in philosophy are also encouraged to consult the track that most closely matches their goals and to adjust the advice to the requirements of the minor.

The track you should take depends on what your interests and career goals are:

> If you are considering **graduate school** in philosophy, you are strongly advised to take the **Graduate School Track.**
>
> If you are considering **law school**, you are advised to take the **Law School Track**
>
> If you have a minor, second major, or strong interest in one or more of the other **arts** or **humanities** (e.g., History, English, the Fine or Performing Arts, etc.), you are advised to take the **Philosophy and the Humanities Track**.
>
> If you have a minor, second major, or strong interest in the natural or social **sciences**, you are advised to take the **Philosophy and Science Track**.

If you have a minor, second major, or strong interest in **computer science**, you are advised to take the **Philosophy and Computer Science Track**.

If you have a minor or a second major in a **career–oriented** discipline such as business or journalism, the you should simply fulfill the requirements of the major in a way that most closely matches your interests.

5.1 The Graduate School Track

The Graduate School Track is designed for students who are considering graduate level education in philosophy, as well as for students who desire an especially rigorous and thorough study of philosophy.

Students who think that they may wish to go to graduate school in philosophy are urged to follow this plan. Although these are not formal requirements, you should consider them to be extremely strong recommendations; following them will help you get into a good graduate program and to do well once you are there.

Recommendations:

1. **Bachelor of Arts:** You are very strongly advised to complete the B.A. degree rather than the weaker and less challenging B.S. degree. (At most schools, it is not even possible to earn a B.S. in philosophy.) The B.A. program at Central provides the kind of well–rounded and challenging education necessary for graduate school. In particular, it requires students to study a foreign language, and this is something that every well–educated person (and certainly every aspiring philosopher) should do. When you select a language to study, keep in mind that many graduate programs in philosophy require students to demonstrate reading knowledge of at least one of the languages most useful for philosophical scholarship (e.g., French, German, Latin, and Greek).

2. **Total Number of Hours in the Major:** If at all possible, take at least 36 hours in philosophy rather than the minimum of 33.

3. **Introduction to Philosophy:** Philosophy 100 is required for the major. You should take this course as early in your studies as possible.

4. **Logic:** You should take the required Introduction to Logic (PHL 140) as soon as possible after declaring your major. You should also take Reasoning and Probability (PHL 145) and Intermediate Logic (PHL 340).

5. **History of Philosophy:** You should take at least three courses in the history of philosophy instead of the required two, which are the History of Early Modern Philosophy (PHL 302) and Ancient Greek Philosophy (PHL 200).

6. **Value Theory:** In addition to the required PHL 218 (Ethical Theories), you should take at least two advanced courses in value theory. Such courses include PHL 422 (Political Philosophy), PHL 418 (Advanced Moral Philosophy), PHL 480 (Philosophy of Art), and PHL 410 (Philosophy of Law). If you cannot take two such courses, then be sure to take at least one.

7. **Metaphysics/Epistemology:** In addition to the requirement that you take PHL 320 (Theory of Knowledge) **OR** PHL 404 (History of Philosophy: Contemporary Period), you should take at least two other courses in metaphysics/epistemology. Such courses include PHL 325 (Philosophy of Mind), PHL 230 (Philosophy of Religion), PHL 225 (Foundations of Cognitive Science), PHL 421 (Philosophy of Language), and PHL 390 (Philosophy of Science). If you cannot take two such courses, then be sure to take at least one.

8. **Capstone:** Plan to take the required senior seminar in either your senior or junior year. If it is unavailable, it may be possible to substitute an independent study (in which case you should choose a topic in the general area in which you think you may specialize in graduate school).

5.2 The Pre–Law Track

The Pre–Law Track is designed for students who intend to go to law school. Pre–law students can benefit greatly by majoring in philosophy. As a group, philosophy majors do very well on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT).[4]

[4] As evidenced by the data here: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1430654

In addition, training in philosophy provides students with skills that are necessary for the study and practice of law. These skills include critical thinking; analogical reasoning; careful reading and analysis of texts; and clear, precise communication. Students considering law school are advised to consider pursuing an additional major or minor in addition to philosophy. Other majors or minors that can help to prepare one for law school, especially when taken in conjunction with a philosophy major or minor, are political science, history, and communications.

Recommendations:

1. **Bachelor of Arts:** You are advised to earn the B.A. degree rather than the weaker and less challenging B.S. degree. (At most schools, it is not even possible to earn a B.S. in philosophy.) The B.A. program at Central provides the kind of well–rounded and challenging education necessary for law school.

2. **Introduction to Philosophy:** Philosophy 100 is required for the major. You should take this course as early in your studies as possible.

3. **Logic:** You should take the required Introduction to Logic (PHL 140) as soon as possible after declaring your major. You should also take consider taking Intermediate Logic (PHL 340). Strong skills in logic are vital for doing well on the LSAT.

4. **History of Philosophy:** PHL 200, Ancient Greek Philosophy, is recommended. The writings of Plato and Aristotle are read in several law school classes (e.g. jurisprudence, constitutional law). The concept of "justice" is important to both writers, as is the role of reason in morality and moral decision-making.

5. **Value Theory:** In addition to the required PHL 218 (Ethical Theories), we strongly recommend taking PHL 410 (Philosophy of Law) if at all possible. The following additional value theory courses are also recommended: PHL 345 (Civil Rights Movement), PHL 422 (Political and Social Philosophy), and PHL 426 (Women in Philosophy).

6. **Metaphysics/Epistemology:** In addition to the requirement that you take PHL 320 (Theory of Knowledge) **OR** PHL 404 (History of Philosophy: Contemporary Period), we recommend taking one or more

of the following: PHL 325 (Philosophy of Mind), PHL 230 (Philosophy of Religion), and PHL 375 (Philosophy of the Social Sciences).

7. **Capstone:** Plan to take the required senior seminar in either your senior or junior year. If it is unavailable, it may be possible to substitute an independent study (in which case you should choose a topic that interests you and that pertains to law, public policy, etc.).

5.3 The Philosophy and the Humanities Track

The Philosophy and the Humanities Track is for students with an interest (including a second major or minor) in English, History, the Fine or Performing Arts, or any of the other arts or humanities. Students who are majoring in one of the other arts or humanities, and who also have a strong interest in philosophy, are encouraged to follow this plan.

Recommendations:

1. **Introduction to Philosophy:** Philosophy 100 is required for the major. You should take this course as early in your studies as possible.

2. **Logic:** You should take the required Introduction to Logic (PHL 140) as soon as possible after declaring your major.

3. **History of Philosophy:** Two courses in the history of philosophy are required for the major. We recommend taking PHL 200 (Ancient Philosophy) as well as PHL 302 (Modern Philosophy). A course in 19th Century Philosophy (PHL 490) would also be useful, especially if it is focused on the important discussions about the relation between the human sciences (and especially history) and the natural sciences by philosophers such as Hegel, Mill, Marx, Compte, Dilthey, Brentano, etc.

4. **Value Theory:** In addition to the required PHL 218 (Ethical Theory), we strongly recommend taking at least one of the following: PHL 480 (Philosophy of the Arts), PHL 286 (Philosophy and Literature). We also recommend PHL 422 (Political Philosophy), and PHL 410 (Philosophy of Law).

5. **Metaphysics/Epistemology:** In addition to the requirement that you take PHL 320 (Theory of Knowledge) **OR** PHL 404 (History of Philosophy: Contemporary Period), we recommend taking one or more of the following: PHL 325 (Philosophy of Mind), PHL 230 (Philosophy of Religion), and PHL 375 (Philosophy of the Social Sciences).

6. **Other Recommendations:** We also recommend taking PHL 426 (Women and Philosophy).

7. **Capstone:** Plan to take the required senior seminar in either your senior or junior year. If it is unavailable, it may be possible to substitute an independent study (in which case you should choose a topic that interests you and that pertains to the humanities).

5.4 The Philosophy and Science Track

The Philosophy and Science Track is for students with an interest (including a second major or minor) in either the natural sciences or the social and behavioral sciences. Philosophy is a natural major to combine with a major in the natural sciences such as physics, biology, mathematics, and chemistry. It is also an excellent major to combine with a major in the social and behavioral sciences, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science. Many of the great philosophers were themselves scientists, including Aristotle (perhaps the greatest biologist before Darwin), Descartes (a mathematician and physicist), and James (a key figure in psychology). Many philosophers have written about science and discussed scientific theories, and many great scientists including Newton and Einstein have discussed philosophical issues. Philosophy has also made vital contributions to the social and behavioral sciences. Marx, Hobbes, Hegel, Kant, Aristotle, Hume, and a great many other philosophers have played important roles in shaping the development of the sciences of psychology, sociology, and political science. Students who are taking a major in either the hard sciences or the social and behavioral sciences, and who have a strong interest in philosophy, are encouraged to follow this plan.

Recommendations:

1. **Introduction to Philosophy:** Philosophy 100 is required for the major. You should take this course as early in your studies as possible.

2. **Logic:** You should take the required Introduction to Logic (PHL 140) as soon as possible after declaring your major. You should also take Reasoning and Probability (PHL 145) and Intermediate Logic (PHL 340).

3. **History of Philosophy:** You are required to take at least two courses in the history of philosophy. It is advisable to make one of these courses PHL 302 (History of Modern Philosophy), since it deals with the period of the scientific revolution and discusses the connection between the philosophy and science of the early modern period. Figures studied may include Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and others.

4. **Philosophy of Science:** You should take PHL 390 (Philosophy of Science). If your interest is primarily in the social and behavioral sciences, you should take PHL 375 (Philosophy of the Social Sciences).

5. **Additional Courses:**

    a. Students who are interested in the natural sciences (physics, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, geology, etc.) should consider taking PHL 404 (Contemporary Philosophy).

    b. Students who are interested in the social and behavior sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, etc.) should consider taking one or more of the following courses: PHL 325 (Philosophy of Mind), PHL 255 (Cognitive Science), PHL 422 (Political Philosophy), PHL 421 (Philosophy of Language), and PHL 425 (Women in Philosophy).

6. **Capstone:** Plan to take the required senior seminar in either your senior or junior year. If it is unavailable, it may be possible to substitute an independent study. If it is unavailable, it may be possible to substitute an independent study. (In that case, you should consider choosing a topic that integrates your scientific interests with your interest in philosophy. For example, there is much written on the philosophy of biology, particularly evolutionary theory. A project might focus on articles discussing evolution and creationism or on the development of evolutionary theory since Darwin. Another project might focus on the ethics of genetic manipulation of plants, etc. You might consider a project jointly supervised by a philosophy professor and a science professor.)

5.5 The Philosophy and Computer Science Track

The Philosophy and Computer Science Track is for students with an interest (including a minor or second major in) the computer sciences. Working with computers involves the same kind of disciplined, precise thinking that philosophy training develops. Both disciplines involve the careful formulation of problems, a meticulous attention to details of logical form, and a careful, systematic approach to problem solving. In addition, an important area of philosophy the philosophy of mind and language has very direct ties to computer science, especially the science of artificial intelligence. For these reasons, students who do well in philosophy often thrive in computer science as well. Students who have talent and interests in both computers and philosophy are encouraged to follow this track, and to take a minor or second major in computer science.

Recommendations:

1. **Introduction to Philosophy:** Philosophy 100 is required for the major. You should take this course as early in your studies as possible.

2. **Logic:** You should take the required Introduction to Logic (PHL 140) as soon as possible after declaring your major. You should also take Reasoning and Probability (PHL 145) and Intermediate Logic (PHL 340).

3. **Additional Courses:** We strongly recommend all of the following courses: PHL 325 (Philosophy of Mind), PHL 255 (Cognitive Science), and PHL 421 (Philosophy of Language).

4. **Capstone:** Plan to take the required senior seminar in either your senior or junior year. If it is unavailable, it may be possible to substitute an independent study. If it is unavailable, it may be possible to substitute an independent study (in which case you should consider choosing a topic that pertains to issues such as cognition, computation, the nature of thought, the computer as model for mind, etc.)

6 Course Offerings & Philosophy's Course Cycling Plan

The philosophy faculty recognizes the need for students to plan their schedules so as to complete their degrees on time. However, the faculty must balance this need with the need to maintain enough scheduling flexibility to deal with changing student enrollment patterns, faculty sabbaticals, special topics offerings, and changes in staffing. In order to balance these competing needs, the philosophy faculty has formulated the following policy.

Course Cycling Policy: It is the policy of the philosophy faculty to offer courses on a regular and predictable basis to the extent that this is possible given other departmental needs and commitments. The faculty will make available to students information about likely future course offerings, with the understanding that the schedule for future semesters is not "written in stone" and is subject to change. Although the faculty will provide as much information about future course offerings as possible, students also bear responsibility for making sure that they have the most up-to-date information available.

Courses and Projected Frequencies

PHL 100—Introduction to Philosophy: Study of the basic issues and methods of philosophy. Depending on instructor, it may have either a problem (e.g., free will, the existence of God, etc.) or a historical orientation (i.e., the study of several major philosophers). ***Several sections of this course are taught every semester.***

PHL 105—Critical Thinking in Everyday Life: Designed to help the student think clearly, evaluate arguments, and develop sensitivity to language. Emphasis is on the development of skills rather than theories. ***This course is usually taught every semester.***

PHL 118—Moral Problems: Study of specific moral problems, issues, and questions associated with such things as life and death, violence, poverty, oppression, and sex. ***Several sections of this course are taught every semester. It is also commonly taught in the summer.***

PHL 140—Introduction to Logic: A study of modern formal logic, with the emphasis of the development of general procedures for deciding whether any argument is correct. ***Several sections of this course are taught every semester. It is also commonly taught in the summer.***

PHL 145—Reasoning and Probability: Study of modern inductive reasoning, with emphasis on causal reasoning, probabilities, and decision theory as they relate to daily life. ***This course is usually taught every semester.***

PHL 200—History of Philosophy: Classical Period: Survey of ancient Greek philosophy, with emphasis on Plato and Aristotle. ***This course is usually taught every year, normally in the fall semester.***

PHL 205—American Philosophy: Historical study of the development and distinctive themes of American Philosophy from colonial times to the present. Emphasis on Pierce, James, and Dewey. ***This course is taught infrequently.***

PHL 218—Ethical Theory: Study of such topics as the nature of the good life, the nature of right and wrong, and the possibility of justifying our moral beliefs. This course may take either a problems or historical orientation. ***This course is usually taught every semester.***

PHL 225—Foundations of Cognitive Science: Introduction to cognitive science, the problems it addresses, its evolving models of the mind, its interdisciplinary nature, and its broader implications for our understanding of ourselves. Identical to PSY 225. ***This course is usually taught every year.***

PHL 230—Philosophy of Religion: An examination of God, immortality, and human destiny from the philosophical point of view. ***This course is usually taught every year.***

PHL 286—Philosophy in Literature: Philosophical themes in selected literary works from ancient, medieval, modern, or contemporary sources. ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a***

year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.

PHL 297—Special Topics in Philosophy: Study of areas in philosophy not included in courses currently listed in catalog. ***This course is taught at the discretion of the faculty.***

PHL 300—History of Philosophy: Medieval Period: A study of faith, reason and logic in the Moslem, Jewish, and Christian perspectives during the Middle Ages. ***This course is taught infrequently.***

PHL 302—History of Philosophy: Modern Period: Rationalism: Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. Empiricism: Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. The Kantian Synthesis. ***This course is usually taught every year, in the spring semester.***

PHL 305—Chinese Philosophy: A survey of Chinese philosophy from the earliest times to the modern period, with emphasis on major thinkers and schools. ***This course is taught infrequently.***

PHL 311—Human Nature, Human Rights: A philosophical examination of classical theories of human nature and how these theories have shaped the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ***This course is new and does not yet have a regular rotation.***

PHL 312—Philosophy of Humanitarian Law: Exploration of philosophical and moral principles underlying the Geneva Conventions and other international laws aimed at reducing suffering and protecting human dignity during armed conflict. ***This course is new and does not yet have a regular rotation.***

PHL 313—Justice, Human Rights, and the Philosophy of Nonviolence: Focusing on questions of social and political philosophy, this course asks what we can learn from nonviolent movements about justice, power, democracy and human dignity. May be offered as Writing Intensive. ***This course is new and does not yet have a regular rotation.***

PHL 318—Business Ethics: Study of the application of the general principles of ethics to moral problems, questions, and issues arising in the business world. *This course is aimed primarily at business students.*

Philosophy majors should consult their advisors about whether it is suitable for your particular interests and needs. ***Several sections of this course are taught every semester.***

PHL 320—Theory of Knowledge: Study of skepticism, the justification of beliefs, and theories of truth. Prerequisites: PHL 100 or PHL 140. ***This course is usually taught every year, in the spring semester.***

PHL 325—Philosophy of Mind: Study of attempts to explain the nature of the mind and its relation to the body. Generally includes discussion of both philosophical works on the mind body problem and by empirical scientific work on the mind and body. ***This course is usually taught every year.***

PHL 328—Animal Ethics: Study of ethical issues, both theorietical and applied, related to human interactions with animals. ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.***

PHL 335—Philosophy of Psychology: An introduction to central areas of concern in the philosophy of psychology and/or the philosophy of psychiatry. ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.***

PHL 338—Medical Ethics: Philosophical exploration of ethical issues in health care, such as the client–professional relationship, medical resource distribution, research ethics, organ allocation, end–of–life issues. ***This course is usually taught every year.***

PHL 340—Intermediate Logic: This course presents first- order quantificational theory as a paradigm of formal theories. In terms of this, some meta-theoretic notions are introduced. Prerequisite: PHL 140. ***This course is usually taught every year.***

PHL 345—The Civil Rights Movement: Examines the civil rights movement from 1954 to the 1980's; based on PBS series: Eyes on the Prize;

identical to SOC 345, PSC 325, REL 345. Prerequisites: Any one of the following: HST 110, HST 111, HST 112, LAR 145, PSC 100, PSC 105, PSC 125, REL 140, SOC 100. ***This course is usually taught every year.***

PHL 348–Decision Theory: An introduction to the central topics of decision theory, including decisions under certainty, ignorance, and risk, the nature of utility, basic probability, and the fundamentals of game theory. ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.***

PHL 390—Philosophy of Science: Study of problems that arise in a critical examination of key concepts of science, such as explanation, theory, confirmation, law, measurement, and scientific change. Prerequisites: PHL 140 and one other course in Group II of the University Program, or consent of instructor. ***This course is usually taught every year.***

PHL 397—Special Topics in Philosophy: Study of areas or topics in philosophy that are not included in courses currently listed in catalog. Prerequisite: three hours of philosophy or consent of instructor. ***This course is taught at the discretion of the faculty.***

PHL 403—History of Philosophy: Nineteenth Century: Analysis of philosophical texts selected from the work of thinkers such as Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. Prerequisites: at least three (3) credit hours in the history of philosophy, or consent of instructor. ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.***

PHL 404—History of Philosophy: Contemporary Period: A study of some of the important philosophical trends since 1900. Prerequisite: PHL 100 or PHL 140. ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.***

PHL 405—Major Philosophers: An in–depth study of a major philosopher. Prerequisites: At least one of the following: PHL 200, 300, 302, 403, 404; or consent of the instructor. ***This course is taught infrequently.***

PHL 410—Philosophy of Law: Study of the nature, role, and purpose of law from a philosophical perspective. Includes consideration of such questions as: What is a legal system, a law, a legal right? What is the relation among law, morality, and custom? ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.***

PHL 418—Advanced Moral Philosophy: An advanced study of contemporary moral theory, meta-ethics, and the methodology of constructing and evaluating ethical theories. Prerequisites: PHL 218 or permission of instructor. ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.***

PHL 421—Philosophy of Language: Study of the structure of language, the relations between language and reality, and the interrelations among language, thought, and culture. Prerequisite: PHL 100, 140, or consent of instructor. ***This course is taught infrequently.***

PHL 422—Political and Social Philosophy: Study of the normative and political issues surrounding the justification of the state, political legitimacy, the relation of the individual to society, and comparisons of the normative features and foundations of various political theories and systems. ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.***

PHL 426—Women and Philosophy: This course will examine what the "great" thinkers have said about women's nature and their role in society. It will also examine how women philosophers approach their discipline, focusing on issues in the philosophy of feminism, such as

assumptions about human nature science, and justice. Prerequisites: one course in philosophy or consent of instructor. Identical to WST 426. ***This course is taught infrequently.***

PHL 480—Philosophy of the Arts: Studies in the experience of arts and discussion of traditional and contemporary esthetics. ***This course will normally be offered every other year. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to delay it for a year, so be sure to check with faculty to determine availability.***

PHL 490—Senior Seminar: A junior-senior seminar for philosophy majors. Prerequisites: Senior status, or junior status with permission of instructor; and at least 21 hours in philosophy. ***This course is usually taught every year.***

JUNIORS: DESPITE THE TITLE, STUDENTS WHO ARE JUNIORS WHEN THIS COURSE IS OFFERED SHOULD CONSULT THEIR ADVISORS ABOUT WHETHER THEY SHOULD TAKE IT DURING THEIR JUNIOR YEAR.

PHL 497—Special Topics in Philosophy: Study of areas or topics in philosophy not included in courses currently listed in catalog. Prerequisite: at least three credits in philosophy and consent of Instructor. ***This course is taught at the discretion of the faculty.***

PHL 498—Independent Research: Research project arranged with and supervised by a faculty member. Prerequisite: consent of instructor. ***This course is taught at the discretion of the faculty.***

PHL 518—Professional Ethics: Examination of the theories and methods used in ethical decision making, with application to common issues in law, journalism, technology, research, education, and the health professions. Prerequisites: Junior status or permission of the instructor. ***This course is taught infrequently.***

PHL 525—Philosophical Problems of the Self: Advanced study of central philosophical questions about persons, such as the mind body problem, the nature of personal identity, and the freedom of the will. Prerequisites: PHL 100 or permission of the instructor. ***This course is taught infrequently.***

PHL 597—Special Topics in Philosophy: Study of areas or topics in philosophy not included in courses currently listed in catalog. Prerequisite: consent of Instructor. ***This course is taught at the discretion of the faculty.***

PHL 598—Independent Research: Selected studies of one or more philosophical work(s). Prerequisite: consent of instructor. ***This course is taught at the discretion of the faculty.***

Philosophy Courses by Area:

Logic:

PHL 105–Critical Thinking in Everyday Life

PHL 140–Introduction to Logic

PHL 145–Reasoning and Probability

PHL 340–Intermediate Logic

History of Philosophy:

PHL 200–History of Philosophy: Classical Period

PHL 205–American Philosophy

PHL 300–History of Philosophy: Medieval Period

PHL 302–History of Philosophy: Modern Period

PHL 403–History of Philosophy: Nineteenth Century

PHL 404–History of Philosophy: Contemporary Period

Value Theory:

PHL 118–Moral Problems

PHL 218–Ethical Theory

PHL 286–Philosophy in Literature

PHL 318–Business Ethics

PHL 345–The Civil Rights Movement

PHL 410–Philosophy of Law

PHL 418–Advanced Moral Philosophy

PHL 422–Political and Social Philosophy

PHL 426–Women and Philosophy

PHL 480–Philosophy of the Arts

Metaphysics and Epistemology:

PHL 225–Foundations of Cognitive Science

PHL 230–Philosophy of Religion

PHL 320–Theory of Knowledge

PHL 325–Philosophy of Mind

PHL 375–Philosophy of Social Science

PHL 390–Philosophy of Science

PHL 421–Philosophy of Language

PHL 525–Philosophical Problems of the Self

Other Traditions in Philosophy:

PHL 305–Chinese Philosophy

PHL 307–Existentialism: From Kierkegaard to Sartre

PHL 450–Phenomenology: A Survey

Special Topics/Independent Study/Capstone:

PHL 297–Special Topics in Philosophy

PHL 397–Special Topics in Philosophy

PHL 490–Senior Seminar

PHL 497–Special Topics in Philosophy

PHL 498–Independent Research

A Note on Independent Study
Faculty members are sometimes willing and able to conduct independent studies with students. There are three main ways that an independent study might benefit a student. First, if a course that is normally offered is not offered, or if the student is unable to take it, it may be possible to take the course as an independent study. Second, if a faculty member has interest and expertise on a topic for which we are not offering a course, the faculty member may be willing to do an independent study on that topic. Finally, an independent study can be a format in which the student does research independently in order to write a significant paper or senior thesis. Independent studies of this sort may be especially valuable for students who are considering going to graduate school, especially if the student is unable to take the Senior Seminar. Whether an individual faculty member will agree to do an independent study usually depends on the faculty member's current workload, philosophical interests and expertise, and other time commitments.

7 Careers for Philosophy Majors

"What can I do with a philosophy major?" is one of the first questions asked by students contemplating a philosophy major. The short answer is "almost anything." Like most liberal arts degrees, philosophy helps you develop the intellectual skills that are necessary for long term success in any number of careers. However, you may need to acquire some additional skills besides the ones that your study of philosophy will develop.

It is important to make at least some preliminary decisions about what kinds of careers interest you sooner rather than later. This will allow you to take steps to supplement your philosophical training with whatever skills

will help prepare you for that kind of career. Ideally, you should begin formulating at least some tentative career plans before your junior year. (Try not to be too intimidated by the need to make some initial career plans: You do not have to decide exactly what you are going to do for the rest of your life. Although some of your choices now will affect your later options, many people successfully change careers long after they have graduated.)

When you are deliberating about what to do after graduation, it may help to narrow down the choices a bit. The things you can do with a philosophy degree fall into two main categories: Going to graduate/professional school or getting a job.

7.1 Graduate/Professional/Law School

Obviously, a degree in philosophy can enable you to go to graduate school in philosophy. More information about graduate school in philosophy appears below.

Many philosophy majors think of philosophy as their second major and choose to go to graduate school in the discipline of their other major. Such students will find that the "second" major in philosophy has helped them develop critical thinking, analytic, and communication skills that will serve them extremely well in graduate programs in almost any discipline.

In addition, a degree in philosophy is one of the very best majors for preparing for law school. In fact, philosophy majors, as a group, do very well on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), as this table illustrates.[5]

[5]This table is from a document created by Michael Nieswiadomy. The full table is available at the following website:
http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/AAS/Phil/upload/LSAT-Scores-of-Majors.pdf

TABLE 1. Average 2007-2008 LSAT Scores

Rank	Major field	Average score	No. of students
1	Economics	157.4	3,047
1	Philosophy	157.4	2,184
3	Engineering	156.2	2,197
4	History	155.9	4,166
5	English	154.7	5,120
6	Finance	153.4	2,267
7	Political Science	153.0	14,964
8	Psychology	152.5	4,355
9	Sociology	150.7	1,902
10	Communications	150.5	2,230
11	Business Administration	149.1	1,971
12	Criminal Justice	145.5	3,306

***Note*: For major fields with at least 1,900 students taking the exam.**

In addition, studying philosophy will provide you with the skills that are necessary for success in law school, and in the legal profession itself.

When supplemented with other course-work, the study of philosophy can also enhance your ability to get into an MBA program. According to the Graduate Management Admission Council, Philosophy majors had the third highest average score on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT).[6] Of course, if you are considering business school, you will need to do significant course work in business, as well.

The study of philosophy can also enhance your ability to get in medical school. The Association of American Medical Colleges, who administer the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) do not keep data for individual majors. But they do keep data for broad categories of majors, and humanities majors (which includes philosophy majors) do quite well.[7] And again, if you are considering medical school, you will also need to do significant course work in the life sciences.

[6]That data can be found in the table beginning on p. 11 of the summary document at the following link:
http://www.gmac.com/ /media/Files/gmac/Research/GMAT%20Test%20Taker%20Data /profileofgmatcandidates_ty200607to201011.pdf

[7]As the table at the following link illustrates:
https://www.aamc.org/download/321496/data/2012factstable18.pdf

7.2 Other Career Options

Philosophy majors who do not wish to attend graduate, professional, or law school still have a wide variety of career options. In general, serious training in philosophy should improve your long term success at whatever career you choose. This is because the skills and habits of mind that your philosophy education develops are essential to long term success in almost any endeavor or career.

However, it is important to note that a philosophy graduate is likely to be much more appealing to potential employers if she or he also has some specific, job related skills to offer. In general, our advice to philosophy majors who do not intend to go to graduate school is to give some thought to what kind of work they would like to do after graduation, and take some courses that will enhance their ability to do that kind of work. Just what those courses should be will depend in part on what sort of job you want. This is why some advanced planning is useful.

What follows is some information to help get you started thinking about what kinds of employment a philosophy major might find attractive, and a bit of advice about how to make yourself more attractive to various kinds of potential employers. Although we believe that this information and advice will improve your chances of getting the kind of job that suits your interests and abilities, it certainly does not guarantee that you will get the job you want. Students are urged to make frequent and effective use of CMU's career counseling services.[8]

The Private Sector

The private sector offers the largest number of jobs. The kinds of analytical skills and creativity that philosophy develops can be extremely useful in a number of businesses and industries. In the last year, both *Forbes*[9] and *Business Week*[10] have run articles about the value of a philosophy major (or liberal arts major more generally, in the case of *Business Week*) in the business world. However, if you want to work in the private sector, you should

[8] CMU Career Services is located in Ronan Hall. Their website is http://www.cmich.edu/about/careers/student/career_services/Pages/default.aspx

[9] http://www.forbes.com/sites/vivekranadive/2012/11/13 /a-liberal-arts-degree-is-more-valuable-than-learning-any-trade/

[10] http://www.businessweek.com/managing/content/jan2010/ca20100110_896657.htm

also consider taking some courses that will give you some very specific skills that you can offer an employer from day one. So at the very least you should take some business courses. You may even want to take a business minor (or maybe even a second major). CMU's Business College offers minors in Accounting, Finance, Management, Business Law, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Economics, and Business Information Systems. Having a minor in one of these areas may help to demonstrate to potential employers that you not only have a well developed mind capable of creative, abstract, analytical, and independent thought, but that you are also willing to learn specific skills necessary for a role in the business world. In addition, having such skills is a way of showing potential employers that while your philosophy-trained intellectual skills can benefit their company in the long run, you also have specific job-related skills that can be put to use from day one.

One of the largest growth areas in the private sector is technology, especially information technology. Many of the analytical and problem solving skills that a philosopher learns are highly marketable in the world of information technology. If you have a talent for computers, you may consider taking some classes, and even a minor, in the computer science department.

A final part of the private sector that is worth noting is the media industry. The kinds of communications and creative thinking skills that philosophy develops are often highly sought after by the media industry. If you have a flair for such things, you may consider supplementing your philosophy degree with courses in journalism, communications, commercial art, and so on. You might also want to consider working for CM Life or a local radio station (or MHTV) to gain some hands–on media experience.

The Public and "Third" (Non–Profit) Sectors

Many students who go into philosophy want to help others and improve society; some dislike the capitalist profit-drive that operates in the private sector. Such students may find employment in the public or "third" sectors attractive. Federal, state, and local governments employ people in such a wide array of positions that it is impossible to list them here. If you are interested in working in the public sector, probably the best thing to do is to peruse some of the many listings of government and public sector jobs available in book form or on the internet (see Career Services for more information). Once you have a sense of what area of the public sector you might be interested in, you should plan your courses so as to get some use-

ful background and/or skills for that particular kind of job. For example, you might want to take some course work in public administration, social work, human environmental studies, management, and so on. It might also be helpful to develop skills in such areas as accounting, computers, graphic art, or communications.

Many people who like philosophy aspire to teach. The most obvious way to use philosophy as a stepping stone to a teaching career is to get a Ph.D. and teach in a college setting. However, there may be opportunities to teach at the high school level, if you are willing to teach primarily in areas other than philosophy. Unfortunately, CMU makes it rather difficult (but not impossible) to major in education and major or minor in philosophy. However, if you plan ahead and are willing to spend a little longer in college, this may be an attractive option, especially given the relatively favorable job prospects for teachers. Another option would be to complete a CMU bachelor's degree, and then earn a teaching degree, either at CMU or another university, afterwards. In any case, you should be aware that very few high schools teach philosophy, so you'll need to complete significant course work (normally at least a minor) in another field (this is where the advanced planning comes in). Good possibilities are areas that interest you, that have some relation to philosophy, and that are commonly taught in high schools. Some examples would be history, the sciences, government, the social sciences, literature, critical thinking, and composition. In order to be qualified to teach in the public high schools, you will need significant course work in one or more of these "teachable subjects." Also, you should note that the structure of the teachers' education program at Central (and elsewhere), and the state licensing requirements, make it very difficult to complete the requirements for a major in philosophy and for the teachers' education program in four years. Nevertheless, if you have strong interests in another area in addition to philosophy, and if you want to teach at the high school level, this may be an option worth considering.

Finally, there is the so called "Third Sector": that part of the economy that is made up of independent, not–for–profit organizations. These range from local charity groups to organizations as large as the Sierra Club and the Red Cross. Working with such groups often suits the political views and lifestyle priorities of philosophy majors. The trade off, of course, is that the financial prospects are not great, and that employment opportunities may be very limited. However, employers in this sector are probably more likely to appreciate the value of training in philosophy and the other liberal arts.

Nevertheless, if you wish to improve your job prospects in this area, it is a good idea to supplement your philosophical training with skills in such areas as computers, graphic arts, media, communications, management, and accounting.

Students who are interested in working in the public and third sector should consider doing an internship. Interesting places that would be nice fits for philosophy students include the Ethics Resource Center, CSPAN, NOW, NARAL, Emily's List, and the Michigan State Capitol. Students who are interested in pursuing such internships should consult with Hope May (see contact information in Section 9) for suggestions and advice.

8 Graduate School in Philosophy

Here is some general information that may be helpful for deciding whether philosophy graduate school is a good choice for you, and some information about how to get into graduate school if it is.

8.1 Some Good News and Some Bad News

First the good news: For those of us who cannot imagine living a life without philosophy, graduate school can be an intensely rewarding experience. The course work is focused exclusively on philosophy. There is time to do original research of your own, under the guidance of faculty whose job it is to give you the personalized attention needed to help you reach your full potential as a scholar. In most cases, you will get a chance to try your hand at teaching. Finally, you will be part of a community of scholars made up of faculty and other graduate students who are as passionate about philosophy as you are. At the end of all of this is the prospect of a career as a university professor. While professors do not earn a great deal of money, the intangible rewards are unbeatable: A career devoted to teaching, thinking, and writing about those things that interest you the most, and a great deal of freedom to determine how and when you will work. If this sounds like an appealing picture, then philosophy graduate school might be an option for you.

Now for the bad news. First, the competition to get into good graduate schools is extremely intense, and going to a bad graduate school will make it difficult if not impossible for you to get a decent job in academia when you finish.

Second, graduate school in philosophy is quite challenging. If you choose to go, plan to make it a top priority. (This is not to say that it has to be your only priority, but if you don't make it a top priority, you will probably not do well.) Many people who begin a Ph.D. in philosophy drop out voluntarily before finishing: Some find that they are not as interested in philosophy as they thought they were; some find that they simply cannot stand teaching; and a few find that they lack sufficient passion or talent to do as well as they would like. In a typical philosophy Ph.D. program, no more than half of those who begin the program ever finish.

Third, students who finish graduate school are likely to face rather limited job prospects. While some philosophers manage to put a philosophy M.A. or Ph.D. to good use outside of academia, this is certainly not the norm. For the most part, a Ph.D. in philosophy prepares you to teach philosophy, and teaching jobs in philosophy are not exactly plentiful (and are unlikely to become so in the foreseeable future). While most good philosophers who get their degrees from good programs do manage to find positions in academia, many of these positions are as underpaid and overworked temporary, part–time, or community college faculty. While some philosophers who enter these less desirable positions do later obtain full–time tenure–track university positions, many perfectly qualified philosophers do not. They must then face the choice between working as part–time, temporary, or community college faculty or leaving academia all together.

Finally, if you plan to pursue a career in academic philosophy, it is a cold hard fact that you may not have very much control over where you live. You are entering a national market, both in terms of getting into graduate school and in terms of getting a job afterwards. If you limit yourself to one geographical region, you will significantly limit your chances of success. Some academics do get lucky and land jobs in the region where they want to live. Others manage to exercise some degree of geographical self–determination by "publishing their way out" of an initial job in a place where they do not want to live. Still others choose less desirable academic jobs (for example as temporary or part time faculty, or as community college faculty) in order to live in a particular area of the country. However, the degree of control over where you live is likely to be quite limited if you pursue a career as a philosophy professor.

This information is not meant to discourage you, but rather to inform you. You have a right to know what you are getting yourself into. Prudence suggests having a backup plan—some kind of career option that you can fall

back on if graduate school does not work out. (For possible backup plans, see section 7.)

8.2 M.A. versus Ph. D.

In order to teach at a university, a Ph.D. is usually required. An M.A. can qualify you to teach in community colleges. In philosophy, it is not necessary to get an M.A. before getting into a Ph.D. program. Almost all Ph.D. programs will admit students without an M.A. Students who begin working on a Ph.D. with only a B.A. will normally be awarded an M.A. along the way to the Ph.D.—the master's degree is usually just a subset of the Ph.D. requirements.

However, obtaining an M.A. before applying to Ph.D. programs may help you get into a better Ph.D. program than you would without it. In fact, certain M.A. programs specialize in and are very successful at placing students in very good Ph.D. programs. So while an M.A. is not a absolute requirement for getting into a Ph.D. program, it may be a good idea to apply to one or more good M.A. programs as backups in case you do not get into a good Ph.D. program.

8.3 Choosing a School

If you are serious about a career in academia, it is important to get your Ph.D. from the best program you can get into (and out of). Indeed, where you get your Ph.D. has a large effect—probably a lot larger than it should—on where or even whether you get a job. Therefore, this is not a decision to make lightly. You should discuss it with at least one faculty member.

Here are some things to keep in mind. First, it is worth repeating that if you want to have a decent career in academia, it is important to go to the best graduate school you can get into (and out of). A school's overall reputation is only an imperfect indicator of how good the philosophy program is. Some very prestigious universities have mediocre philosophy programs, and vice versa. There is a popular and influential—but also somewhat controversial—ranking of philosophy departments called the "Philosophical Gourmet Report," or the "Leiter Report." This is available on the Web at www.philosophicalgourmet.com. Good critical discussion of the "Leiter Report" can be found at http://frege.brown.edu/heck/philosophy/aboutpgr.php.

Second, it is important to choose a graduate program that will offer you good training in the specific area (metaphysics, ethics, etc.) and in the specific type (analytic, continental) of philosophy that you wish to pursue. If you don't know exactly what you want to study, this is fine, but being able to narrow it down to one or two general areas will help you select a program that is right for you. In addition, some graduate school applications will ask you to talk about what area you plan to specialize in, and it is important to be able to say at least something about the area or areas of philosophy that interest you the most.

Third, it is important to apply to quite a few programs of different strengths. Good Ph.D. programs in philosophy receive far more applications than they can accept. This means that they can be quite selective, and that competition for the limited number of places at good programs is quite intense. You will increase the chances of getting into the best program you can if you apply to a fairly wide range of programs. If you only apply to the very top programs, you may not get into any of them. If you apply only to programs that you are sure you can get into, then you may miss the chance to get into a program that is better than you think you can get into. Because there are application fees, it is tempting to cut corners here, but doing so limits your chances of getting into the best school you can. Avoid this temptation! Where you go to graduate school can have a big impact on the rest of your life, so this is not the time to pinch pennies. One common rule of thumb is that you should apply to no fewer than six programs: Two that you are fairly certain you can get into, two more prestigious schools that you think you might be able to get into, and two longshots.

Fourth, when you apply to graduate school, it is important to keep in mind that you are entering a national market, both in terms of getting into graduate school and in terms of getting a job afterwards. If you limit yourself to one geographical region, you will significantly limit your chances of success.

Finally, as noted earlier, taking an M.A. in philosophy first may improve your chances of getting into a good Ph.D. program. If you plan to pursue an M.A. as a stepping stone to a better Ph.D. program, then you should find out how well the various M.A. programs that interest you do at placing its students into good Ph.D. programs. Many students will apply to several good Ph.D. programs and also apply to some of the better M.A. programs as a backup.

Faculty members are available to help you plan a strategy for getting into a graduate school that is right for you given your specific talents and

interests. This is a big, important decision, and we urge you to let us help you obtain the information and advice that you need to make it well.

8.4 How Long it Takes and What it Involves

M.A. programs normally take around two years to complete. In most cases, the first year is devoted mainly to course–work. The remaining time is then spent doing a master's thesis. Such a thesis is normally expected to be between 50 and 100 pages long, and of professional quality. Some programs offer "course–work only" programs. They generally include some sort of additional course–work, capstone experience, or overall competency exam to compensate for the lack of a thesis.

A Ph.D. takes longer. Students who start with only a B.A. should be able to complete the Ph.D. in four to six years, although it is common for people to take much longer. Students who start with an M.A. can often complete the Ph.D. in a somewhat shorter time, depending on how much "credit" is given for the M.A. work.

Normally the first two years of the Ph.D. are devoted to course–work. A number of programs require students to demonstrate at least a reading knowledge of at least one "philosophically important" language (such as Latin, Greek, French, or German). If you plan to write a dissertation on, say, Aristotle, or Kant, or Descartes, you should be prepared to gain the proper language skills so that you can do at least some of your reading in the original language. During the third year, most programs require students to pass some sort of test that will certify that they are ready to begin working on the dissertation. The nature of this test varies from program to program. It used to be the norm that such a test would consist of "cumulative" or "comprehensive" exams over the main problems and themes the main areas of philosophy. Some schools are now replacing such exams with other kinds of tests or experiences. Some of these involve an oral presentation of the student's preliminary research on the topic on which she plans to write her dissertation. In any case, passing of these tests qualifies the student to begin work on the dissertation. A person who has passed such a "qualifier" (as it is often called) is said to be ABD ("all but dissertation").

Writing the dissertation normally consumes the final two or more years of the Ph.D. program. The dissertation is normally expected to be between 100 and 200 pages long and of professional quality. Many dissertations eventually lead to publications. In some cases a whole dissertation is published as a

book (usually after much revision); more often, parts of the dissertation are reworked and published as articles. Once the dissertation is completed, the student must pass an oral dissertation defense. At that point, she is awarded the Ph.D.

8.5 Paying for It

Compared to medical school, law school, or MBA programs, philosophy graduate school is relatively inexpensive. There are two reasons for this. First, the tuition for graduate school in philosophy is generally low, and it is often simply waived for good students. These "tuition waivers" are a very common form of financial aide they are in effect free tuition (though students who receive them are still usually required to pay fees for such things as health care and technology). Tuition waivers, by the way, do not normally cover "room and board." Second, most graduate students in philosophy are offered some sort of income generating opportunity, more commonly referred to as "funding." These come in two main forms: The assistantship and the fellowship. The assistantship is much more common, but, for reasons that will become apparent, somewhat less desirable.

An assistantship is rather like work study at the graduate level. Assistantships come in two main kinds: teaching assistantships and research assistantships. In philosophy, teaching assistantships are by far the more common of the two. A teaching assistant ("TA") normally assists a professor who is teaching a very large class. A TA is typically responsible for meeting with students in small sections (usually 20–30 students) and conducting discussions, reviews, or question/answer sections that will help them digest and apply the material that the professor covered in lecture. A typical philosophy TA might be expected to conduct two or three such sessions per week. In addition, the TA is responsible for most if not all of the grading for a portion of the students in the course, and she is generally required to attend the professor's lectures. A TA is paid a small salary (often around $10,000 per year) and is normally given a tuition waiver (i.e., tuition is free). Research assistantships are fairly rare in philosophy. A research assistant ("RA") is generally assigned to help one or more professors with some kind of research project. Such help typically involves clerical or library work rather than high–level intellectual collaboration.

Fellowships are much less common than assistant–ships. They are also far more prestigious, since they only go to the very best students. A fellowship

is simply a grant of money. The amount of money (or "stipend") is usually comparable to that of a TA salary. A fellowship usually also includes a tuition waiver (i.e., free tuition). The recipient of a fellowship does not have to do any specific work to earn the stipend and tuition waiver—this form of funding is simply a gift. However, fellowships normally only last a year or two, so most people who do manage to get one will also end up having a teaching assistantship for part of their time in graduate school. In most cases, if a student obtains a fellowship, the department will make at least an informal commitment to offering her a teaching assistantship after the fellowship is over.

Most Ph.D. programs offer either fellowships or assistantships to the majority of their graduate students, and continue to do so for the five years that is considered the normal length of time it should take to complete the Ph.D. Many M.A. programs also offer such support to many (and sometimes even most) of their students. If you are admitted to a graduate program without any funding, you should carefully consider the prestige of the school, your talents and interests, your goals, your financial situation, and how comfortable you are with risk and debt. Jobs as philosophy professors are neither plentiful nor lucrative, and it is important to think very carefully before incurring large amounts of debt in order to try to get one.

8.6 Applying to Graduate School

Please consult with your philosophy faculty advisor for more information and advice about the specifics of the application process. Here is some general information:

1. Admissions to graduate programs normally take place on a one year cycle. Applications are normally due around the end of the fall semester before the fall in which you would begin. Thus, if you wish to begin graduate school in the fall of 2014, you would need to apply during the fall of 2013.

2. You will almost certainly need to take the GRE ("Graduate Records Exam"), which is a standardized test that most graduate schools use to help make admission decisions.

   You will need to take the GRE no later than the fall semester one year prior to the year you wish to begin graduate school. Thus, if you wish

to begin graduate school in the fall of 2014, you would need to take the GRE during the fall of 2013.

Different programs weigh the importance of GRE scores differently (and a few programs do not even require students to take the GRE). A department's website or application materials often mention how important GRE scores are in determining who gets in. In general, however, GRE scores are important enough to warrant spending a good deal of time and effort preparing for the exam.

3. You will need a writing sample. This should be your best work, and it is best if it is in the general area that you would like to focus on during graduate school. Most writing samples begin as term papers, so keep this in mind as you take your courses. Normally the faculty member who taught the class in which you wrote the term paper will be willing to help you develop it into a suitable writing sample. Your faculty advisor may also be willing to help. In addition to displaying your best philosophical work, the writing sample should be clearly written and should demonstrate a meticulous command of English grammar and punctuation (so plan to spend a lot of time proofreading it).

4. You will need several letters of recommendation (usually three). These should be from philosophy faculty. Ideally, they should be written by professors from whom you have taken more than one class, and who like your work. It is also desirable to have a letter from a professor who taught a course in the general area that you plan to study in graduate school (if you know what that is). A letter written by someone who went to a program to which you are applying may carry a bit more weight with that particular department, but this extra weight is not likely to be very great.

   Be sure to give the faculty writing letters for you plenty of advance notice and plenty of time to write. It is also a good idea to provide them with copies of work that you did in their classes to remind them of the quality of your work. Ideally, you should make these requests early in the autumn semester, but certainly no later than the middle of the semester. Once you have requested the letters, do not be shy about reminding the people writing for you and checking to see that the letters have been done on time.

5. Although most good Ph.D. programs do not require a master's degree for admission, as noted earlier, you may have a better chance of getting into a good Ph.D. program if you get a master's degree first. Discuss this with your advisor and perhaps with other faculty members who can help you develop the most effective strategy for getting you into the best graduate program possible.

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10 Philosophy Student Group

The only currently registered student organization (RSO) directly connected to the Philosophy Program is The Student Philosophers. The Student Philosophers was formed several years ago by a group of students interested in providing a forum for student discussion of philosophical issues and other topics of intellectual interest in an informal setting outside of regular classes. They typically meet once a week.

Although the level of activity in this group varies according to current student interest, the group has shown interest in sponsoring speakers, holding discussion forums, and taking trips to conferences held by philosophical organizations such as the American Philosophical Association in such cities as Chicago, Washington DC and New York.. Philosophy students are encouraged to consider becoming involved The Student Philosophers. Information, including contact information and meeting times, is available from the main office of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, and is often posted on the bulletin board outside the office.