



Abelardo Morell, *Dictionary*, 1994

A Guide To Philosophy at Duquesne

2007-08

for Majors
and Minors

Welcome to the Department of Philosophy!

You've chosen a fascinating course of study that directly impacts many of the most important questions we can ask about the way we live our lives, who and what we are, how we think about our cultures, societies, and political institutions, and how we understand the very fabric of human reality. As a Philosophy majors or minor, you will acquire a broad competence in the history of philosophy and a thorough understanding of the systematic foundations of philosophical views. You will study the logic and discourses surrounding the conceptual interpretation of texts, arguments, and ideas. We see philosophy as the cultivation of dialogue and informed reflection on the fundamental issues of human life, and we look forward to you joining our conversation.

Because the opportunities and requirements for each department differ, and because the transition to a new course of study can often be confusing, this packet is meant to orient you to the Philosophy program. It outlines the requirements for the major and minor, introduces you to the departmental course structure, familiarizes you with the opportunities the department provides for its students, orients you to departmental events, and discusses the long term career possibilities opened by the study of Philosophy.

Beyond your Philosophy course professors (of which I will likely be one), shortly after declaration of the major you will be assigned a faculty member in the Philosophy Department who will serve as your primary contact in the program as you make your way through the major or minor. You should feel free to contact them with any questions or concerns you might have about the program. As you meet more department faculty, you will find that they are all willing to help clarify your concerns, to assist you in planning your course of study, and to discuss philosophical issues with which you find yourself wrestling.

I also encourage you to play an active role in the Duquesne community of Philosophy majors and minors through the activities and events of the Undergraduate Philosophy Society, and to consider becoming a member of the Duquesne chapter of Phi Sigma Tau, the international honors society for students of philosophy.

Again, welcome to the program. If I have not already done so, then I look forward to meeting you soon.

Dr. Jim Swindal
Chair and Professor of Philosophy

DEPARTMENTAL CONTACT INFORMATION

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THE STRUCTURE OF THE MAJOR AND MINOR

Minimum Requirements for the Philosophy Major

- All University requirements.
- All College of Liberal Arts requirements.
- At least ten courses (30 credits) in Philosophy, according to this scheme:
 - 1) CORE 132: Basic Philosophical Questions (three credits).
 - 2) One additional course (three credits) at any level.
 - 3) Any three additional courses (nine credits) from the History of Philosophy Sequence: PHIL 300: Ancient Philosophy; PHIL 302: Medieval Philosophy; PHIL 302: Early Modern Philosophy; PHIL 304: Later Modern Philosophy; PHIL 305: Contemporary Philosophy
 - 4) Three additional courses (nine credits) at the 200, 300, or 400 levels.
 - 5) Two additional courses (six credits) at the 400 or 500 levels.

Many majors take more than the ten required Philosophy courses. After Basic Philosophical Questions, majors are encouraged to take at least two courses at the 200 level or in the 300 level History of Philosophy Sequence before moving on to Thematic 300 level courses or Advanced 400 level courses.

Students with double majors in Philosophy and English can reduce the total credits required in one of the two majors from 30 to 24. Please see you advisor for details.

Minimum Requirements for the Philosophy Minor

- All University requirements.
- All College of Liberal Arts requirements.
- Successful completion of the requirements for another major.
- At least five Philosophy courses (15 credits), according to this scheme:
 - 1) CORE 132: Basic Philosophical Questions (three credits).
 - 2) One additional course (three credits) at any level.
 - 3) One additional course (three credits) at the 200, 300, or 400 levels.
 - 4) Two additional courses (six credits) at the 300 or 400 levels.

After completing Basic Philosophical Questions, minors are encouraged to take at least two courses at the 200 level or in the 300 level History of Philosophy Sequence before moving on to Thematic 300 level courses or Advanced 400 level courses.

PHILOSOPHY COURSES

As a major or minor, you are largely in control of the type of Philosophy courses you take. It is important to realize that the content of most courses – particularly those at the 300 and 400 levels – can change substantially from year to year. *The syllabi for all Philosophy courses are posted outside the department a few weeks prior to the opening of registration each semester.* I encouraged you to consult the course descriptions on these syllabi (which are much more extensive than those in the course catalog) as you make your decisions.

100 Level Introductory Courses

These courses are open to all students and carry no prerequisites. They include the University Core Philosophy course (Basic Philosophical Questions), as well as introductions to Ethics, Logic, and various kinds of applied philosophy. Majors and minors should consider moving beyond the 100 level after completing Basic Philosophical Questions. The topics covered in these courses are also engaged at higher course levels.

200 Level Intermediate Courses

These courses are electives suitable for all students and require one 100 level Philosophy course as a prerequisite (usually Basic Philosophical Questions). The Intermediate courses cover a broad range of topics, including Philosophy and Film, Philosophy of Sex, Eastern Philosophy, Philosophical Roots of Psychology, Problems in Feminism, Philosophy of Technology, Existential Philosophy, Philosophy of Law, and many others. The particular courses offered at this level will vary from year to year.

300 Level Historical and Thematic Courses

These courses are designed for majors, minors, and other students with a serious interest in philosophy. They require two Philosophy courses as prerequisites (usually Basic Philosophical Questions and a 200 Level Intermediate course). 300 level Courses include the History of Philosophy sequence (Ancient, Medieval, Early Modern, Later Modern, and Contemporary), as well as Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art, Philosophy of Music, and Philosophy and Literature. The History of Philosophy Sequence courses will usually be intensive surveys of the thinkers and texts of the period, but sometimes will focus on the work of a particular philosopher. Not all courses in the history sequence are offered every year, but each will be offered at least once within any two-year period. The other 300 level courses are offered irregularly.

400 Level Advanced Courses

These courses are designed for advanced majors, minors, and other students with a serious interest in philosophy. They are usually intensely focused on a narrowly delimited philosophical figure or topic. Some are cross-listed with graduate program seminars. 400 level courses require one 100 or 200 level course and two 300 level courses as prerequisites. Recent courses have included Philosophy of Time, Plato's *Republic*, The Metaphysical Novel, Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Marx and Marxism, Film as Second Reflection, Nietzsche and the Will to Power, Adorno and Aesthetic Theory, Husserl's *Ideas*, The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir, and many others. Offerings at the 400 level vary from year to year.

500 Level Graduate Courses

Graduate courses are intended primarily for Master's and Doctoral students. Some are cross-listed at the 400 level and open to advanced undergraduate enrollment. Undergraduate access to non-cross-listed 500 level courses is usually restricted to majors in the Philosophy Honors Program. In rare cases, an advanced major not in the Honors Program may be admitted to a 500 level course that is not cross-listed, if that course is particularly relevant to the student's interests, and if the student has already demonstrated an ability to work with advanced philosophical material. The permission of the course instructor is a prerequisite for registration. Offerings at the 500 level vary from year to year.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAJORS

Symposia, Colloquia, and Visiting Speakers

The Philosophy Department frequently invites renowned philosophers from across the globe to present papers, lead discussions, or to teach mini-courses. Majors and minors are invited to attend and fully participate in these presentations. Faculty and Graduate students also present their work at departmental colloquia in an informal atmosphere. Information about upcoming events will be posted throughout College Hall, and distributed through the mailing list of the Undergraduate Philosophy Society.

The Undergraduate Philosophy Society (UPS)

The student-run Undergraduate Philosophy Society is a vibrant part of the life of the Department. In recent years, the primary activity of the UPS has been to organize an undergraduate philosophy colloquium, debate, and discussion series, where majors and minors present their own work in philosophy for discussion by their peers. Other activities have included informal discussion sessions centering on the philosophical aspects of contemporary political and cultural issues., informational sessions on the graduate school application process, visits to art exhibitions at local museums and galleries, screenings and discussions of philosophically relevant films followed by discussions, as well as outings to see films of the same nature in theaters. The Undergraduate Philosophy Society is always developing new events, and welcomes the participation of all. Please contact the student coordinators to get involved (see the first page), or volunteer to become a coordinator yourself!

Phi Sigma Tau (PST)

The Philosophy Department hosts a local chapter of the International Honors Society for Philosophy (Phi Sigma Tau). PST serves as a means to recognize students with an active interest in philosophy who achieve high academic scholarship. Along with rewarding the academic work of philosophy students, PST provides resources and opportunities for further philosophical endeavors. Membership in PST includes subscriptions to *Dialogue*, the bi-annual undergraduate philosophy journal. All members of Phi Sigma Tau must be at least a second semester sophomore, have completed at least two philosophy courses at Duquesne with grades of A, and have a minimum overall QPA of 3.5. Initiation to PST requires a \$25 fee paid to the national office for administrative expenses. No further fees of any kind are required to maintain membership. For more information, contact the PST President (see first page).

The Philosophy Honors Program

The Department administers an Honors Program for outstanding undergraduate majors with an overall QPA of at least 3.3 and a Philosophy course QPA of at least 3.5. Admission to the Honors Program takes place during a major's Junior year, and requires recommendation by two faculty members. Students in the Philosophy Honors Program take two 500 level Graduate Seminars (six credits) during their Senior year. They also register for PHIL 468 (three credits), an independent research course for which they write an Honors Thesis. Juniors interested in admission to the Honors Program should contact the Philosophy Honors Program Director (see first page).

Reduced Credit Philosophy and English Double-Major

Students who wish to pursue a double-major in Philosophy and English may reduce the total credit requirements for one of these majors by 6 credits. Please stop by the Philosophy or English Departments for details on the credit requirement structure for the reduced credit double-major.

Early Application to Law School

Philosophy majors interested in pursuing legal careers may apply to most Law Schools after completing 90 credits toward graduation.

Doctoral Program Application Assistance

Philosophy majors who decide to pursue doctoral degrees are encouraged to seek the assistance of departmental faculty as they embark on the process. Faculty will provide advice about researching particular programs and schools as well as about the application process. They are also willing to provide suggestions regarding appropriate papers to use as writing samples for applications. The Department sponsors regular session to help orient students who may be interested in applying to doctoral programs.

Undergraduate Conference Travel Funding

Over the last decade, Philosophy departments across the country have begun to organize conferences where undergraduate majors present their work to one another. When a major's work is accepted for such a conference, the Department will attempt to provide partial travel funding, subject to budgetary constraints.

The Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center

Level One of Duquesne's Gumberg Library is host to The Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center, one of the largest collections of texts in contemporary Continental Philosophy in the country. Students are encouraged to pursue research opportunities offered by the Center and its collection.

Study Abroad

In concert with the Study Abroad Office, the Department encourages majors to pursue study abroad options. Faculty members have extensive contacts with scholars throughout Europe (particularly France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and England) and can help facilitate contacts with professors and universities

PHILOSOPHY AND YOUR FUTURE

When deciding whether to major in Philosophy, many students are concerned about what they will be able to 'do with their degree' after graduation. Since many of you have already declared a Philosophy major, you've probably already thought about this at least a little. But it doesn't hurt to be reminded that since Italian philosophers first formulated its structure in the Renaissance, the purpose of a liberal arts curriculum has been to educate the whole person so as to prepare them for any path in life they might choose. Philosophy has always been an integral element of such an education. By choosing to major in Philosophy you are preparing yourself for almost any career you might be able to imagine.

Is Philosophy an 'impractical' degree? By no means! Our program, of course, prepares majors and minors for graduate studies in disciplines across the Humanities and Social Sciences. But employers in almost every field recognized the versatility of an undergraduate education grounded by a Philosophy major. Philosophy majors become lawyers, public relations specialists, policy analysts, doctors, university presidents, teachers, diplomats, and business owners. They go into consulting work, banking, financial analysis, and management. Their writing skills prepare them for careers in politics, television, film, theater, advertising, and literature. They become publishers, editors, journalists, researchers, public interest advocates, lobbyists, medical and business ethicists, congressional staffers, political activists, judges, art critics, and just about everything else (including, of course, philosophers).

One of the reasons that the degree is so versatile is that our course of studies will train you in the most important "transferable skills" that employers across the board are looking for: general problem solving, the ability to assess complex data, communication skills, persuasive power, and excellent written expression. The course of study in Philosophy will prepare you to be able to think in a cross-disciplinary way and will train you to develop sound methods of research and analysis.

If you are considering a career that requires an advanced degree, you should know that Philosophy majors have *extremely* high acceptance rates to doctoral programs in the Humanities and Social Sciences, to Law Schools, to Masters in Business Administration Programs, and even to Medical Schools. The standardized admission test scores for Philosophy majors in all these disciplines (the G.R.E., the L.S.A.T., the G.M.A.T., and the M.C.A.T.) tend to be extremely high. The professional literature in these areas recommends that future Humanities and Social Science professors and researchers, future lawyers, future businessmen, and future doctors pursue the kind of broad liberal arts education that you will engage in as a major in Philosophy. Philosophy majors who plan on applying to graduate programs in Business or Medicine are encouraged to consult with faculty in the Department as they plan their courses. Like doctoral programs and Law Schools, these programs are extremely friendly to Philosophy majors. However, they also generally expect a minimal pattern of elective courses directly relevant to their fields.

Philosophy for advanced M.A.s and Ph.D.s in the Humanities and Social Sciences

The philosophy major provides excellent preparation for students who wish to pursue higher degrees throughout the Humanities and Social Sciences. Philosophy majors successfully pursue graduate degree programs in Philosophy, English, Comparative Literature, History, Psychology, Political Science, Sociology, Communications, Art History, Cultural Studies, Cinema Studies, and many other fields.

Philosophy majors do extremely well on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). They score significantly higher than *all* other majors in *every* field on the GRE Verbal section (only English majors even come close), higher than *and all* other majors in the Humanities and Social Sciences and most in the Natural Sciences on the GRE Quantitative section, and higher than *all* majors in *every* field but Physics on the GRE Analytical section. And now that the GRE Analytical section has become writing-based, Philosophy majors are likely to be at the top of its list when the next statistical studies are released.

Philosophy for Law School

One of the traditional paths to law school, Philosophy provides the skills described as essential by the American Bar Association and the Association of American Law Schools: the ability to structure and evaluate arguments and engage in reasoned debate, deductive, inductive, and analogical reasoning, close reading and critical analysis of complex textual material, rigorous analytical writing skills, the ability to develop insight into, rather than merely information about, the institutions and values with which human beings are concerned.

Philosophy majors do extremely well on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). They score higher than *all* other majors in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Business (including Pre-law, Criminology, History, Politics, and Economics), as well as most majors in the Natural Sciences (only Mathematics and Physics do better). *Philosophy majors have the highest admission rate to law school of any major in every field: 82.4%.*

Philosophy for Business School

The Philosophy major – accompanied by basic Economics courses (Micro- and Macroeconomics) and post-collegiate work or internship experience – provides excellent preparation for admission to MBA programs. Large firms and MBA program admissions officers look for candidates with a strong command of analytical thinking, communication skills, and analogical reasoning. They recognize that students with a background in Philosophy are well prepared for the kind of logical approach required for advanced administration and long-range planning.

Philosophy majors do extremely well on the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT). They score higher than all other majors in the Humanities and Social Sciences (including Economics majors), all majors in Business and Commerce programs, and most majors in the Sciences (only Engineering, Mathematics, and Physics majors score higher).

Philosophy for Medical School

The Philosophy major – accompanied by the basic run of science courses (one year of Biology, one year of Physics, and two years of Chemistry) – provides an strong basis for applying to medical school. The American Association of Medical Schools emphasizes that a science major is *not* a prerequisite for medical school and does not confer any increased chance of acceptance. It recommends instead that undergraduates pursue a broad background in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences.

Humanities and Social Science majors do extremely well on the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) (data is not available for Philosophy majors in particular). They score significantly higher than all other majors, including Biological Sciences, Mathematical and Statistical Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Specialized Health Sciences. Philosophy majors have the highest admission rate to medical school of any major in every field but Biomedical Engineering: 60.2%.

Sources: Chronicle of Higher Education, *Almanac of Higher Education: 1996*. Educational Testing Service, "Guide to the Graduate Record Examination Program, 1996-1997." American Bar Association, "Preparation for a Legal Education." Association of American Law Schools, "Policy on Pre-legal Education." Law School Admissions Council, "1996 Data Services Group Report." American Bar Association, "LSAT Data File, 1996-97." Graduate Management Admission Council, "Profile of Graduate Management Admissions Test Candidates, 1997-98 to 2001-02." American Association of Medical Colleges, "Characteristics of the 1999 MCAT Examinees, 1999" and "Applicants Matriculant File, 11/22/2000."

Whatever path you take after completing your B.A., I am sure that your degree in Philosophy will serve you well. In the meantime, settle back and enjoy your courses in Philosophy, get to know other majors and minors, introduce yourself to department faculty, and consider becoming active in the Undergraduate Philosophy Society. Think deep, incisive, and creative thoughts.

Again, welcome to the Philosophy Department!

Jim Swindal