

# Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of General Studies in Philosophy

## Why study philosophy?

In philosophy we ask big, important questions. While asking such questions is easy, answering them is difficult. Because these questions are often abstract and vague, it is necessary to use precise reasoning and analysis to clarify what exactly it is we are asking. Only then can we attempt to develop answers.

In studying philosophy, you will learn what others have thought about life's big questions. You will also learn to challenge those views, and to develop your own thoughts in a precise, logical manner. Philosophy will help you develop critical thinking skills, enabling you to analyze the underlying logic and assumptions in arguments about a variety of topics. This is a skill that generalizes to virtually every area of life.

## Undergraduate Admission

### Admission to KU

All students applying for admission must send high school and college transcripts to the Office of Admissions. Prospective first-year students should be aware that KU has qualified admission requirements that all new first-year students must meet to be admitted. Consult the Office of Admissions (<http://admissions.ku.edu/>) for application deadlines and specific admission requirements.

Visit the International Support Services (<http://www.iss.ku.edu/>) for information about international admissions.

Students considering transferring to KU may see how their college-level course work will transfer on the Office of the University Registrar (<https://registrar.ku.edu/creditransfer/>) website.

## First- and Second-Year Preparation

Although majors are not required to take courses in philosophy in their first 2 years, the department recommends that they do so. Prospective majors are encouraged to begin with one of the 100-level courses.

These courses provide introductions to broad areas of philosophy, and students may apply one 100-level course toward the major requirements. PHIL 310, PHIL 384, and PHIL 386 are required prerequisites for upper-division work and should be taken early. Prospective majors should consult the director of undergraduate studies early to plan course work.

## Requirements for the B.A. or B.G.S. Major

Code	Title	Hours
Philosophy Major Core Knowledge and Skills		
History of Philosophy. Satisfied by taking both of the following:		
PHIL 384	Ancient Philosophy	3
PHIL 386	Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant	3
Philosophy Major Required Electives		
Symbolic Logic. Satisfied by one of the following: 3		
PHIL 310	Introduction to Symbolic Logic	
	or PHIL 610 Metalogic	

Value Theory. Satisfied by completing one of the following courses: 3

PHIL 662 Aesthetics

PHIL 666 Rational Choice Theory

PHIL 668 Political Philosophy

PHIL 670 Contemporary Ethical Theory

PHIL 671 Feminist Theories in Ethics

PHIL 676 Medical Ethics: Life and Death Issues

Theoretical Philosophy. Satisfied by completing one of the following courses: 3

PHIL 620 Philosophy of Natural Science

PHIL 622 Philosophy of Social Science

PHIL 630 Philosophy of Mathematics

PHIL 638 Philosophy of Language

PHIL 648 Theory of Knowledge

PHIL 650 Metaphysics

PHIL 654 Philosophy of Mind

Philosophical Traditions. Satisfied by completing one of the following courses: 3

PHIL 506 Chinese Thought

PHIL 557 Kant

PHIL 558 Seventeenth Century Philosophy

PHIL 559 Eighteenth Century Philosophy

PHIL 560 Nineteenth Century Philosophy

PHIL 570 Nietzsche

PHIL 582 Existentialism

PHIL 590 Phenomenology

PHIL 592 Contemporary Continental Philosophy

PHIL 605 The Philosophy of Plato

PHIL 607 The Philosophy of Aristotle

PHIL 608 Hellenistic Philosophy

### Capstone Course

Capstone Requirement. Majors must complete a capstone research experience. It normally is taken during the senior year. Alternatively, students can choose to write a senior honors thesis. Satisfied by one of the following: 3

PHIL 499 Senior Essay

PHIL 699 Philosophy Capstone Seminar

### Additional Electives 12

Satisfied by completing 12 additional hours of PHIL courses, not more than 3 credit hours can be below 300 and at least 3 credit hours must be at the 500-level or above.

**Total Hours 33**

## Major Hours & Major GPA

While completing all required courses, majors must also meet each of the following hour and GPA minimum standards:

### Major Hours

Satisfied by 33 hours of major courses, or 39 hours required if completing departmental honors.

### Major Hours in Residence

Satisfied by a minimum of 15 hours of KU resident credit in the major.

### Major Junior/Senior (300+) Hours

Satisfied by a minimum of 30 hours from junior/senior courses (300+) in the major.

**Major Junior/Senior (500+) Hours**

Satisfied by a minimum of 12 hours from junior/senior courses (500+) in the major.

**Major Junior/Senior (300+) Graduation GPA**

Satisfied by a minimum of a 2.0 KU GPA in junior/senior courses (300+) in the major. GPA calculations include all junior/senior courses in the field of study including F's and repeated courses. See the Semester/Cumulative GPA Calculator (<https://sis.ku.edu/gpa-calculator/>).

A sample 4-year plan for the BA degree in Philosophy can be found here: Philosophy (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/philosophy/ba-bgs/ba-philosophy/>), or by using the left-side navigation.

A sample 4-year plan for the BGS degree in Philosophy can be found here: Philosophy (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/philosophy/ba-bgs/bgs-in-philosophy/>), or by using the left-side navigation.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- communicate, in written and oral form, key aspects of (a) the history of philosophical thought, and (b) the major currents in contemporary debates across the different branches of philosophy.
- evaluate the cogency of argumentative discourse, provide reasons for this evaluation, and express these reasons clearly to a variety of audiences.
- argue clearly and persuasively for their position, recognizing its weaknesses and developing its strengths.
- recognize, examine, and critically assess normative standards of social relations, practices, and institutions, including a wide range of human activities depending on value judgments.

## Departmental Honors

To graduate with departmental honors, undergraduates must take 6 hours in philosophy in addition to the 27 hours required for the B.A. or B.G.S., for a total of 33 hours. The 6 additional hours include

- An additional course numbered 500 or above for a total of at least 15 hours at that level, and
- PHIL 499 Senior Essay.

A committee of 3 faculty members reads the finished essay, gives the candidate an oral examination over the essay, and determines whether it warrants honors. This committee must consist of the instructor in PHIL 499, the departmental honors coordinator, and a third member of the philosophy faculty.

Honors are not awarded to anyone who receives a grade lower than B in PHIL 499 and whose final grade-point average in philosophy is lower than 3.5. To be eligible for departmental honors, students must file a declaration of intent with the departmental honors coordinator no later than enrollment for the final undergraduate semester.

The most important element in departmental honors is the honors essay. Once a student has determined the area in which he or she wishes to work, he or she should arrange to write the essay under the guidance of a faculty member with appropriate expertise. Ideally, this work should be completed during a single semester. However, students often find it difficult to complete the essay in one semester. Therefore, we recommend

that the essay be begun in the semester before the one in which the student intends to graduate (typically, in the fall semester of the senior year).

The honors essay should be intermediate between a master's thesis and a term paper. It should normally be at least 20 pages (6,000 words) long. It should go beyond mere exposition, whether by criticism or by comparison of different works. Interpretations of rare or difficult texts may occasionally be accepted.