PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

Students must also complete the Undergraduate Registration Requirement (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/requirements-policies/undergraduate-registration-requirement/) and the degree requirements of their home school.

Because the study of philosophy involves the critical discussion of the most fundamental questions asked by human beings, it helps develop breadth of understanding and clarity of thought. This character of philosophical inquiry makes choosing philosophy as a second major attractive to many students. Moreover, with appropriate supporting courses, a philosophy major can be a sound preparation for many careers, whether or not they involve further study.

The core of the program is a firm grounding in the history of philosophy. Against this background, students may tailor a program that meets their particular interests.

The core requirements for the major cannot be replaced by courses taken outside the specified offerings of the Philosophy Department. This includes courses completed on study abroad programs, online courses, courses transferred from other institutions, and courses offered by other departments at Northwestern. Only in cases of established exceptional hardship will the Philosophy Department undergraduate committee be able to consider a request to substitute a core credit (see department website FAQ for further details). A student who might be facing such circumstances needs to immediately contact the department advisor or the director of undergraduate studies to find out more about the possibilities.

Honors in Philosophy

Majors with strong academic records (GPA in the major of 3.5) and an interest in pursuing honors should have project proposals approved by a faculty supervisor and the director of undergraduate studies or the philosophy department honors convenor before the end of winter quarter of junior year. They then take PHIL 398-1 in spring quarter of junior year and PHIL 398-2 in fall quarter of senior year; neither counts toward major requirements. Students may petition to begin this thesis sequence in fall quarter of senior year, so that their sequence moves forward a quarter, respectively.) Near the end of the second quarter (i.e. PHIL 398-2), students submit completed senior theses, which are evaluated by the Honors Committee in terms of level of research and philosophical reflection. In the spring, students present their research results at a conference open to the public.

Students whose papers, presentations, and grades meet department criteria are recommended to the college for graduation with honors. For more information see the department website (https://www.philosophy.northwestern.edu/) and Honors in the Major (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/ethics-civic-life/brady-scholars-program/).