PHILOSOPHY

For more than 150 years, Fordham’s philosophy department has trained students and teachers in the Jesuit tradition. As part of that tradition, our program is grounded in a strong understanding of the history of philosophy from the ancient world to the contemporary.

Fordham highly values philosophical pluralism. Our faculty represent diverse schools and perspectives, and students enjoy an uncommonly well-rounded philosophical education. All graduate students take courses spanning the history of philosophy, including contemporary philosophy.

Fordham’s philosophy department is renowned for its strengths in Continental philosophy, Epistemology, Ethics, Medieval Philosophy, Metaphysics, and Philosophy of Religion.

The Jesuit tradition emphasizes eloquentia perfecta, effective and clear writing and speaking. Fordham's philosophy graduate students are therefore strongly encouraged to publish and present their original research. Our coursework emphasizes papers over examinations, and we conduct yearly seminars on professional writing.

As a Fordham graduate student, you are at the heart of one of the most vibrant philosophical communities in the world. Through the New York City Graduate School Consortium, our students can take classes for Fordham credit at NYU, Rutgers, Columbia, Princeton, and the CUNY Graduate Center, and attend the numerous symposia, conferences, and lectures that take place in the New York area.

At Fordham, you will gain a wealth of experience in teaching philosophy. Our doctoral students regularly begin teaching introductory philosophy courses in their second or third year, and we provide training through pedagogy seminars and faculty mentorship.

Admissions

Candidates are expected to have at least 24 undergraduate credits in philosophy, preferably a major. Non-philosophy majors should have solid training in some other demanding discipline, such as mathematics, science, classical Latin or Greek; an undergraduate GPA of not less than 3.3 for seven semesters is required, with an average of 3.5 in philosophy. Completed applications will include each of the following items:

- Official degree transcripts confirming prior degree conferral should be ordered at least one month prior to the application deadline. Please ensure that they are sent directly to the Office of Admissions via secure electronic delivery. If electronic delivery is not available, please request that your transcripts be submitted directly via post, in a sealed envelope, to: Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Office of Admissions, Fordham University, 441 E. Fordham Rd., Bronx, NY 10458. Please note: you may upload unofficial copies of your transcripts to your application while the Office of Admissions awaits receipt of your official transcripts.
- Resume/CV
- Statement of intent (500 - 750 words, submitted electronically, via the online application)
- Writing sample (5 - 20 pages, submitted electronically, via the online application)
- Three letters of recommendation (submitted directly by referees via the online application)
- Official GRE scores (should be sent directly by the testing service to the Office of Graduate Admissions, Fordham University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences – Code #2259).
- English Proficiency - International applicants whose native language is not English are required to complete and submit to GSAS prior to matriculation their official scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). GSAS will also consider a student’s International English Language Testing System (IELTS) —Cambridge English Proficiency Level language testing results. Competitive applicants will have earned TOEFL scores above 100 and/or an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher.

The department may prescribe additional coursework for students whose backgrounds are deficient, in which case the time limit for completion of coursework will be extended.

For more information about admissions to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, please visit their page on the Fordham website.

Programs

- PhD in Philosophy
- MA in Philosophy
- MA in Philosophical Resources

Courses

PHIL 5001. INTRODUCTION TO PLATO. (3 to 4 Credits)
Study of Plato’s developing thought, starting with the materials he inherited from poetic andphilosophical forerunners, and analyzing how his original ethical-political interests compelled him to confront epistemological, metaphysical, and theological concerns. Course will focus mainly, but not exclusively, on early and middle dialogues.
Attributes: CEED, CEMP, CLAS, MVSG, PGAN.

PHIL 5002. 19TH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY. (3 to 4 Credits)
Post-Kantian developments in philosophy from Hegel to Nietzsche.
Attribute: PGCM.

PHIL 5003. NATURAL LAW ETHICS. (3 to 4 Credits)
A study of the natural law tradition in ethics: its origins in classical philosophy, its integration with Christian thought in the Middle Ages, and its application to selected contemporary problems. A study of the principles of natural law ethics and its applications to selected current moral problems. The course includes a treatment of the historical origins of the theory of natural law, with special emphasis on the relevant texts of Thomas Aquinas from the Summa Theologiae. Among the topics treated will be the relation of morality to positive law and to divine law, the nature and limits of authority, the common good, the nature of the human person, virtue and vice, and such principles as subsidiarity double effect, and finality.
Attributes: CEED, CEMP, PGCO.

PHIL 5005. CLASSICAL MODERN PHIL. (3 to 4 Credits)
A study of the history of philosophy from Descartes to Kant.
Attribute: PGCM.
PHIL 5009. INTRO TO ARISTOTLE. (3 to 4 Credits)
An introduction to the thought of Aristotle through the study of the De Anima and the Metaphysics.
Attributes: CEED, CEMP, MVSG, PGAN.

PHIL 5010. INTRODUCTION TO ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. (3 to 4 Credits)
This course will be a general introduction to Aquinas's philosophical thinking. We shall pay special attention to his philosophy of God. We shall also turn to what he says about questions such as the scope of human knowledge, the nature of the human being, and the nature and significance of human action. As well as being expository, the course will consider the cogency of Aquinas's position on various topics. It will also try to relate what Aquinas says to what other philosophers, especially modern philosophers, have had to say. The course will not presuppose any previous detailed knowledge of Aquinas on the part of students.
Attributes: CEED, CEMP, MVSG, PGMD.

PHIL 5012. INTRO TO ST. AUGUSTINE. (3 to 4 Credits)
This seminar is going to provide a systematic survey of the main themes of St. Augustine's philosophy and theology. Topics will include faith and reason, divine ideas, time, eternity, and creations, the theology of the Holy Trinity, the nature of the soul, the freedom of the will and divine predestination, good and evil, original sin and divine grace, and the human history as the history of salvation. The unifying theme of the discussion will be a synthetic account of St. Augustine's Neoplatonic Christian anthropology, occasionally contrasted with St. Thomas Aquinas' Aristotelian Christian anthropology. The discussion will be organized around student presentations and two term papers on topics other than one's presentation topics.
Attributes: CEMP, MVSG, PGMD.

PHIL 5075. CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY & FAITH. (3 Credits)
A survey of significant movements in 20th century European philosophy in regard to their consideration of and impact on questions of faith or religion, especially in regard to postmodern culture, the "death" of the subject, and the grounding of rationality.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 5098. SEM: PHILOSOPHIC INTEGRATION 1. (3 Credits)
This course supports the student in constructing an adequately grounded and coherent personal synthesis of the five systematic areas of philosophy, i.e., metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of the human person, philosophy of God, and ethics. Appropriate course work in each of these areas, as well as in the history of philosophy, is presupposed. For students in MAPR program.

PHIL 5099. SEM: PHILOSOPHIC INTEGRATION 2. (3 to 4 Credits)
A continuation of PHGA 5098, Seminar: Philosophical Integration I.

PHIL 5100. LOGIC I. (3 to 4 Credits)
An introduction to symbolic logic.

PHIL 5114. NORMATIVE ETHICAL THEORY. (3 or 4 Credits)
This is a masters-level introduction to major theoretical approaches in normative ethics, including virtue ethics (mainly in the Aristotelian tradition), utilitarianism, deontological or rights-based theories, and contractualism. It does not cover natural law theories or alterity ethics. The main readings will focus on contemporary examples of these normative theories with some attention to applications, historical sources may be included as needed, but our discussion will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the theories rather than on historical developments. The course assumes no particular background, though it is helpful if students have read some Aristotle, Kant, and Mill before.
Attributes: CEED, CEMP, PGCO.

PHIL 6025. PHILOSOPHY'S ORIGINS. (3 Credits)
Starting with the beginnings of Philosophy in Greek antiquity (i.e., the testimonies and fragments of works transmitted from the early pre-Socratics of the 6th century B.C.E), the seminar takes up three intersecting topics. The first considers commentary from the classical Greek era to the 20th century on how and why this new inquiry, "philosophy", originated. The second, related topic is the role, indeed the centrality, of the topic of "origins" for the early Greek thinkers themselves. The third seminar topic is the concept of "origins".
Attribute: PGAN.

PHIL 6190. FEMINIST POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY. (3 Credits)
We will balance a study of feminist critiques with a study of feminist contributions to reimagining political theories, institutions, and practices. We will focus our study around a current scholarly debate in the field, while inquiring into the philosophical context of this debate in canonical texts and figures.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6215. FRENCH PHIL OF EDUCATION. (3 Credits)
An examination of philosophies of education in recent French thought, paying particular attention to the teaching of philosophy itself. Authors studied include Bourdieu, Derrida, Le Doeuff, and Ranciere.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6242. LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY. (3 Credits)
In this course we will examine the relationship between language and identity, primarily as it is theorized by three thinkers writing in French: Jacques Derrida, Edouard Glissant, and Barbara Cassin.

PHIL 6251. AMERICAN PRAGMATISM. (3 Credits)
A survey of the central themes and figures of American Pragmatism from Peirce to the present.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6252. AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY. (3 Credits)
From transcendentalism to naturalism- Emerson, Royce, Peirce, James and Dewey.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6410. UNDERSTANDING AND WISDOM. (3 Credits)
The course will mainly deal with contemporary work from epistemology and philosophy of science on these topics, but we will also look at some ancient traditions that are relevant, as well as spend a few classes looking at continental and hermeneutical approaches.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6436. PHILOSOPHY OF TIME AND PERSISTENCE. (3 Credits)
This course is an exploration of the contemporary analytic debates regarding the nature of time and ontological persistence, with special focus on the relationship between the human person and time.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6457. MIND-BODY PROBLEM. (3 Credits)
"The mind-body problem" refers loosely to the philosophical difficulties involved in integrating the image of ourselves as free, rational beings having beliefs, desires, hopes, fears, joys, loves, etc. with the image of ourselves as complex biochemical systems. We consider some of these difficulties with an eye to understanding how they have shaped approaches to human nature both in philosophy and in scientific disciplines such as psychology, and then consider whether any of these difficulties can be overcome using the resources available to the currently dominant philosophical theories. Finally, we examine the claim that there are viable historical alternatives to these theories capable of circumventing the mind-body problem altogether.
Attribute: PGCO.
PHIL 6460. INTENTIONALITY. (3 Credits)
This course explores the key concept of intentionality both in its medieval and in its modern varieties, as it functions in various medieval and modern theories of cognition and mental representation.
Attribute: PGMD.

PHIL 6471. RESPONSIBILITY AND BLAME. (3 Credits)
In this course: we will examine the nature of moral responsibility, the nature of blame, and the connection between them. We will ask questions such as the following. Does moral responsibility require free will? Can we understand blame exclusively in terms of altitudes such as resentment and indignation, or must blame have an outward manifestation? Does understanding the nature of blame shed light on the nature of moral responsibility?
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6472. RESPONSIBILITY, BLAME, AND FORGIVENESS. (3 Credits)
In this course, we will examine the nature of moral responsibility, blame, and forgiveness, as well as the connections between them.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6580. VIRTUE EPistemology. (3 Credits)
Virtue epistemologists are especially interested in what it is that makes people intellectually excellent: what it is, for example, that makes a person a responsible inquirer, of what is that makes his or her beliefs amount to knowledge. In this class we will consider the main positions and some of the most recent developments in the area of virtue epistemology.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6630. DISCOURSE ETHICS. (3 Credits)
This seminar will trace the development of Jurgen Habermas's "discourse ethics." We will also analyze alternative versions of discourse ethics in the work of Karl-otto Apel, Albrecht Welmer, Seyla Benhabib, and Rainer Forst, and consider challenges from communitarians like Charles Taylor and contractualists such as Thomas Scanlon and Stephen Darwall.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6805. TOPICS IN PHIL. OF REL.. (3 Credits)
This course will introduce and discuss a range of topics in the philosophy of religion. Topics to be considered will include: the propriety and possibility of natural theology; arguments for God's existence; the problem of evil; the attributes of God; life after death.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 6850. HERMENEUTICS. (3 Credits)

PHIL 7009. PLOTINUS. (3 Credits)
This course will examine in detail Plotinus' original positions in metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, and ethics as presented in the Enneads along with his polemics against the Stoics, Epicureans, Peripatetics, and quasi-philosophical schools such as the Gnostics. An exposition and critical discussion of 'Summa Theologica', la, 1-26.
Attribute: PGAN.

PHIL 7018. ANCIENT PSYCHOLOGY. (3 Credits)
This course examines ancient accounts of human cognitive and moral psychology. The primary focus will be on Plato and especially Aristotle, since their accounts are the most complete, but Epicurean and Stoic psychology will also receive attention.
Attribute: PGAN.

PHIL 7031. ALIENATION AND REIFICATION. (3 Credits)
This seminar traces the development of two central concepts in critical social theory with the aim of evaluating their current relevance for social criticism. We begin with Marx and Lukacs and then consider their influence on Frankfurt School theorists such as Horkheimer, Adorno, and Habermas. We conclude with recent attempts by Honneth and Jaeggi to rejuvenated the two concepts within social philosophy.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 7039. AQUINAS'S PHILOSOPHY OF GOD. (3 Credits)
This course is devoted to explaining and commenting on Aquinas's philosophy of God and presented in texts such as his Summa Contra Gentiles, his Summa Theologiae, and his De Potentia.
Attribute: PGMD.

PHIL 7042. BURIDAN ON THE SOUL. (3 Credits)
This course is going to be based on the new edition of the Latin text and annotated translation of Buridan's "Questions on Aristotle's De Anima" along with a companion volume of critical essays, analyzing his sometimes astonishingly modern ideas concerning the nature, powers and workings of human and animal souls, consciousness, and understanding, shedding a stark light on the historical origins and conceptual roots of some of the most persistent problems in post-Cartesian philosophy of mind.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 7071. AQUINAS:QUESTIONS ON GOD. (3 Credits)
An exposition and critical discussion of 'Summa Theologica', la, 1-26.
Attribute: PGMD.

PHIL 7076. Metaphysical Themes in Duns Scotus. (3 Credits)
This course focuses on central metaphysical issues in the thought of Duns Scotus, such as being, substance, essence and individuation.
Attribute: PGMD.

PHIL 7080. MEDIEVAL VIEWS ON COGNITION AND CERTAINTY. (3 Credits)
In this course, we will study some medieval thinker's views on cognition and certainty. The main focus will be on the debate of cognition and the role of divine illumination in the years following Thomas Aquinas's death in authors such as Henry of Ghent, John Duns Scotus, and Peter Auriol. Some consideration will be given to the influence that the later medieval debate had on early modern philosophy.
Attributes: MVSG, PGMD.

PHIL 7106. KANT I. (3 Credits)
The aim of this course is to achieve an appreciation of, and some facility with the problems and mode of philosophizing that dictate these arguments in Kant's Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Accordingly, the course is organized along thematic lines that, while corresponding to specific passages and sections of the Kritik, provide a route through the text as a whole. After an initial introduction to the structure and context of the book, the course will focus primarily on the positive doctrines of Kant's critical or transcendental philosophy as presented in the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic of the Transcendental Logic.
Attribute: PGAN.

PHIL 7110. DESCARTES AND SPINOZA. (3 Credits)
Primarily a study of Descartes' Meditations, preceded by a reading of his Regulae and Discourse on Method, and a study of Spinoza's Ethics, preceded by a reading of his Emendation on the Understanding and selections from other works.
Attribute: PGCM.
PHIL 7122. THE LIMITS OF THOUGHT IN KANT AND POST-KANTIAN PHILOSOPHY. (3 Credits)
In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant argues that the categories provide a priori knowledge of appearances but cannot yield knowledge of things in themselves. Kant's claim raises a general question about the limits of conceptual thought. This course will examine the development of this question in Kant and post-Kantian thought.

PHIL 7140. KANT AND GERMAN IDEALISM. (3 Credits)
This course will examine Kant’s detailed treatment of issues in the Critique of the Power of Judgement and will examine how thinkers like Hegel, Schelling, and Schiller helped to develop the German Idealist tradition in the wake of Kant’s third and final critique. 

PHIL 7153. HUSSERL'S LATER THOUGHT. (3 Credits)
An investigation of Husserl’s later philosophy by way of a careful reading of Cartesian Meditations and the Crisis.

PHIL 7157. PHENOMENOLOGY. (3 Credits)
This course will examine some of the major themes in the phenomenological literature: methodology; intentionality; and self-awareness; embodiment; subjectivity; agency and action; the Other; and social cognition. Readings will include both historical and contemporary figures.

PHIL 7159. KIERKEGAARD. (3 Credits)
Sources, development, influence of Kierkegaard’s thought.

PHIL 7161. NIETZSCHE. (3 Credits)
Detailed investigation of principal Nietzschean themes. 

PHIL 7164. FIRST PHILOSOPHY: NIETZSCHE, HEIDEGGER, AND THE PRESOCRATICS. (3 Credits)
This seminar focuses on Friedrich Nietzsche’s lectures on The Pre-Platonic Philosophers and his essay on the tragic age in addition to Martin Heidegger’s lecture courses and essays on Pre-Socratic thinking. Research emphasis highlights contemporary readings of the Presocratics.

PHIL 7166. RECOGNITION & INTERSUBJECTIVITY. (3 Credits)
This course will examine the notion of recognition, as well as the related notion of intersubjectivity, in philosophical discourses extending from the late eighteenth century to the present time.

PHIL 7203. MERLEAU-PONTY. (3 Credits)

PHIL 7204. Wittgenstein and Later Wittgenstein. (3 Credits)
A focus on Wittgenstein's classic texts (Tractatus, Philosophical Investigation, On Certainty) along with later receptions of Wittgenstein's work.

PHIL 7210. WHITEHEAD. (3 Credits)
An analysis of the development of the philosophy of organism in Whitehead’s earlier works and its full expression in Process and Reality. 

PHIL 7229. DERRIDA. (3 Credits)
A study of major texts of Jacques Derrida dealing with such themes as writing, difference, and deconstruction, as well as his relation to traditional and contemporary figures.

PHIL 7236. The Emotions and Moral Perception. (3 Credits)
This course will examine phenomenological (and some comparable non-phenomenological) accounts of (1) the nature of the emotions and (2) their role in evaluation, in general, and moral evaluation, in particular. 

PHIL 7240. CONTEMPORARY METAETHICS. (3 Credits)
Metaethics steps back from substantive moral debates to ask questions about morality itself. We will consider a range of positions in order to see the benefits and limitations of different ways of answering these questions, and each student will work at developing her or his own answers throughout the term.

PHIL 7250. EVIDENTIAL UNDERMINING. (3 Credits)
Sometimes we gain confidence that a belief is false. Sometimes we gain evidence that our grounds for a belief are not good grounds. The latter is a case of "evidential undermining". We will explore several important recent arguments that purport to show that particular moral, philosophical, and religious beliefs face evidential undermining.

PHIL 7310. SELF-CULTIVATION PHILOSOPHIES. (3 Credits)
Self-cultivation philosophies propound a program of development for radically improving the lives of human beings on the basis of an understanding of human nature. We will study the nature and variety of these practice-oriented philosophies through an examination of prominent examples from ancient India, China and Greece as well as more recent approaches in Western philosophy.

PHIL 7350. EVIDENTIAL UNDERMINING. (3 Credits)
We will read Heidegger’s 1927 Sein and Zeit, which may be found in English in a range of translations, along with several other works in order to situate a reading of the recently published Black Notebooks, and even more recently translated for publication in English. The topic is not merely the controversial and scandalous question of what is called Heidegger’s anti-Semitism but also the status of his published and unpublished writings in addition to the question of the question of being.
PHIL 7605. PHILOSOPHICAL AESTHETICS. (3 Credits)

PHIL 7650. ARISTOTELIAN ETHICS. (3 Credits)
This course, "Aristotelian Ethics" is centrally concerned with Aristotle's book, "The Nicomachean Ethics." We will work through the book in detail, mostly in the order that the text is presented. Along the way, we shall examine some relevant secondary literature in the field.
Attributes: CEMP, PGAN.

PHIL 7664. PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE. (3 Credits)
Philosophy of Literature is devoted to studying the tensions and connections between philosophical analysis and the evocations and descriptions of literary experience. We will consider the philosophy of hermeneutics insofar as this grounds literary interpretation; the philosophical problems concerning the status of the author and the reader in respect to the generation of meaning; the ethics of literary representation; and the ontology of literary language. Our readings will be drawn from such sources as Gadamer, Sartre, Bachelard, Heidegger, iser, Natanson, Nehamas, Hamburger, and Blanchot.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 7730. RECENT WORK IN EPISTEMOLOGY. (3 Credits)
This seminar will examine recent articles and books in contemporary epistemology. The seminar's themes will likely include: the nature of reasons and evidence, the challenge of skepticism, and the purpose of epistemological theorizing. The seminar's texts will feature perspectives from traditional, social, feminist, and virtue epistemology.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 7758. HUMAN DIGNITY. (3 Credits)
This seminar will focus on recent philosophical work on the concept of dignity. Issues discussed will include the connection between the idea of human dignity and equal status, the role of dignity in constitutional law, how various modes of social suffering and moral injury are tied to the concept of dignity, and the relation between the concepts of human dignity and human rights.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 7760. Dimensions of Political Justice. (3 Credits)
An intensive introduction to key themes in contemporary analytic political philosophy, including contractarian and consequentialist theories of justice; human capabilities and other possible grounds for universal basic rights; collective action problems, market failures and public goods; other problems for libertarian conceptions of legitimate government (including equal opportunity, reward according to merit, and initial acquisition); and (time permitting) issues in global justice including globalizing democracy.
Attribute: CEMP.

PHIL 7857. TOPICS IN CONTEMPORARY METAPHYSICS. (3 Credits)
The full course title is "Topics in Contemporary Metaphysics." In this course one central topic of current work in analytic metaphysics will be investigated thoroughly. The topics change every time the class is offered.
Attribute: PGCO.

PHIL 8001. SEM: PHIL EDUCATION. (3 Credits)
Detailed investigation of methods in the teaching of philosophy and preparation for teaching Fordham core courses.

PHIL 8050. PROSEMINAR: PHIL RSCH/Writing. (0 or 3 Credits)
A detailed study of methods for successful philosophical research and writing.

PHIL 8070. PROFESSIONAL WRITING SEMINAR. (0 Credits)
This seminar is designed to assist advanced graduate students in Philosophy and prepare for successful academic careers doing research and publishing in Philosophy. Participants will meet regularly to discuss student work and strategies for effective professional writing and success in publishing. This will assist them in preparing articles for publication in professional philosophy journals as well as developing writing samples for job applications. The seminar will be open to PhD candidates who have successfully defended a dissertation proposal. Students may repeat the course.

PHIL 8999. INDEPENDENT STUDY. (0.5 to 4 Credits)

PHIL 9999. DISSERTATION DIRECTION. (1 Credit)