

# Philosophy

Philosophy aspires to uncover, analyze, and evaluate the fundamental values and assumptions implicit in human activities and practices such as science, the arts, religion, morality, and social and political institutions. Philosophy reflects the values of the liberal education in its concern for the processes of questioning and knowing. Ultimately, philosophy is concerned with the examination and development of a coherent view of the world and our place in it.

Skills acquired through study in philosophy provide excellent preparation for graduate study or a professional school. For example, an undergraduate concentration in

philosophy may establish the foundation for a successful career in law. As problems of morality and ethics are addressed in various sectors of society, philosophy majors are being called on to use their skills in new areas. The philosophy graduate is prepared for positions requiring leadership, responsibility, and management. Outlined below are some of the characteristic skills developed by philosophy majors and a selection of occupational opportunities.

## SKILLS & ABILITIES

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Students acquire and sharpen intellectual and practical skills valuable in a wide range of careers through the process of analysis and critical evaluation that makes up much of the study of philosophy. These skills include the ability to analyze and reason, use verbal argumentation, employ concrete examples, and write effectively. The ability to interpret conflicting points of view with accuracy

and reach a decision that is rationally and objectively defensible, for example, would typically be used by a mediation attorney, but would be equally important to a diplomat, crisis intervention counselor, or member of a biomedical ethics committee. A sampling of skills and abilities follows.

### Analysis

Reading critically  
Logical reasoning  
Interpreting data/  
relationships  
Identifying and clarifying  
values  
Synthesizing ideas

### Communication

Advising/counseling  
Articulating abstract  
concepts  
Presenting alternative  
viewpoints  
Interviewing  
Writing effectively  
Negotiating  
Resolving conflicts  
Debating

### Problem Solving

Linking specific issues to  
broad concepts  
Defining problems  
Weighing alternatives  
Identifying solutions  
Evaluating results  
Investigating alternatives  
Applying logic to problems

### Research/Project Development

Writing proposals  
Evaluating information  
Integrating opposing  
viewpoints  
Comparing perspectives  
Organizing ideas/  
information

## OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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The list that follows offers a glimpse of the wide-ranging career paths of Philosophy majors. Skills acquired in this discipline are transferable to any field requiring abstract thought, interpretation, and analysis. In addition, it might be noted that academic career opportunities should continue to increase.

Below is a representative list of occupations and career paths compiled from national data and follow-up surveys of University of Michigan graduates with a degree in philosophy. Some of the occupations listed below, such as legislative assistant, may require additional expertise. Advanced study is generally needed for those occupations marked with a • on the following list.

<b>Government &amp; Law</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Business/Industry</b>	<b>Non-Profit Organizations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy analyst</li><li>Foreign service officer</li><li>• City solicitor</li><li>• Consumer protection advocate</li><li>Legislative assistant</li><li>• Public defender</li><li>State senator</li><li>• Public health officer</li><li>• Mediation attorney</li><li>Speech writer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Human services coordinator</li><li>• Teacher</li><li>Community development liaison</li><li>• Guidance counselor/ advisor</li><li>• Professor</li><li>• Court liaison</li><li>Affirmative action officer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Artificial intelligence and expert systems designer</li><li>Consumer relations representative</li><li>• Economist</li><li>Underwriter/claims adjuster</li><li>• Genetic counselor</li><li>• Information broker</li><li>Web designer</li><li>Programmer/Analyst</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Community organizer</li><li>Fundraiser</li><li>• Clergy</li><li>Graphic artist</li><li>Association public relations director</li><li>• Biomedical ethics researcher</li><li>Grants administrator</li></ul>

## CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

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In addition to a prerequisite introductory course in philosophy, the concentration requires 25 credits of philosophy. The philosophy credits must include a course from each of the following areas: symbolic logic; history of philosophy; ethics or political philosophy; philosophy of language and mind, or philosophy of knowledge and reality; one advanced undergraduate seminar (401 or 402); one

400-level course (excluding 401, 402, 419, 455, 498, or 499); and one 300-level or higher course such as 345, 383, or 385.

A philosophy minor is also offered. Please consult the LS&A Bulletin for minor curriculum requirements. (An academic minor in Philosophy is not open to students with a concentration in Philosophy.)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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For information about choosing a career, graduate/professional school, internships, or job descriptions; and for library resources:

The Career Center  
3200 Student Activities Building  
764-7460  
[www.careercenter.umich.edu](http://www.careercenter.umich.edu)

For information about choosing a major and about concentration and degree requirements:

Department of Philosophy  
2215 Angell Hall  
435 S. State 1003  
764-6285

LS&A Academic Advising Center  
1255 Angell Hall  
764-0332