Philosophy and Religious Studies at York College

Studying philosophy and religious studies at York College means critically studying the abiding questions facing humankind: What is the nature of God? Why be moral? Is there an afterlife? What is beauty? What is truth? What is justice? What does it mean to be human?

As a student of philosophy you’ll study some of the world’s greatest thinkers and texts and come to understand the extent to which philosophers have influenced and shaped the development of science, art, literature, politics, education, and theology. You’ll develop analytical, critical, and interpretive abilities, cultivating your capacities for reflection and self-expression.

The study of philosophy not only affects how you think but also your development as a person. Studying philosophy can be truly enriching and highly gratifying, and it is excellent preparation for lifelong learning and an enhanced intellectual, political, and social existence. It can help you to live better by helping you to understand yourself as a thinking, acting being. Socrates famously said that “the unexamined life is not worth living;” and philosophy is the tool he recommended for examining both one’s own life and the various possibilities open to you throughout your life.

In the following pages, we invite you to learn more about studying Philosophy and Religious Studies at York College. For more information, contact any of our faculty or the Coordinator for Philosophy and Religious Studies, Dr. Dennis Weiss (dweiss@ycp.edu).
Students are usually drawn to the study of philosophy because of their intrinsic interest in the discipline and the kinds of questions of it raises.

- Students of philosophy address the most basic issues behind the human quest for understanding: What does it mean to be human? Am I in charge of my destiny, or determined by my environment? How should I live my life? What’s the nature of love, and of hatred? What is beauty? Does God exist? Is life meaningful? What happens when I die?

- The study of philosophy furnishes students with the skills in communications, and comparative and critical thinking, necessary for a successful career in competitive corporate America.

- Philosophy develops the capacity to see the world from the perspective of other individuals and other cultures; it enhances one’s ability to perceive the relationships among the various fields of study; and it deepens one’s sense of the meaning and varieties of human experience.

- The study of philosophy cultivates the capacities and appetite for self-expression and reflection, for exchange and debate of ideas, for life-long learning, and for dealing with problems for which there are no easy answers.

There are also many tangible benefits for studying philosophy.

- Students of philosophy develop the skills and abilities necessary for an enormous range of careers, including among others careers in business, law, medicine, research, public policy, ministry, government, and public relations.

- "For all the jokes about them, philosophy majors appear to do remarkably well" -- so says C. M. Cropper, in a New York Times article that explains that philosophy majors are increasingly successful in a world in which business and government depend more and more on abstract reasoning abilities.

- The New York Times Career Planner reports that "Philosophy is one fundamental area of study that has found a new role in the high-tech world." In an information-based economy, people who can think conceptually are more and more valuable.

- Philosophy majors consistently achieve among the highest scores of all majors on the LSAT, GRE, and GMAT.
**Our Majors**

**PHILOSOPHY, B.A.**

Students pursuing a major in Philosophy critically study the abiding questions facing humankind: What is the nature of God? Why be moral? Is there an afterlife? What is beauty? What is truth? What is justice? What does it mean to know? The study of philosophy develops analytical, critical, and interpretive abilities, cultivating a student’s capacities for reflection and self-expression. Students majoring in Philosophy develop a comprehensive knowledge of the history of philosophy and the representative philosophical problems and issues of the discipline. The study of philosophy further enhances the student’s capacity to apply philosophical methods to intellectual problems across academic fields of study.

The study of philosophy is excellent preparation for careers that demand careful reading, critical thinking, and decision-making abilities. A major in Philosophy provides a solid foundation for students planning careers in medicine, law, education, and business. Philosophy majors are among the top performers on the Law School Aptitude Test and the Medical College Aptitude Test. Philosophy majors also succeed in executive and management sectors of business that require the ability to assimilate information, analyze situations, and produce effective solutions to complex problems.

**PHILOSOPHY AND BUSINESS, B.A.**

The Philosophy and Business, B.A. is an innovative program highlighted by academic excellence and relevance to a world of careers that prepares students for today’s dynamic and competitive global environment. Combining the best aspects of a liberal arts degree with practical training in general business, this program prepares students for the twenty-first century work environment. The Philosophy and Business program includes courses in business administration that focus on concrete problem solving for today’s business climate and courses in philosophy that emphasize the critical and creative thinking necessary to succeed in today’s fast-paced business environment. Philosophy’s emphasis on critical thinking, interrogating assumptions, examining frameworks, and critiquing institutional commitments provides a strong foundation for success in all areas of business and entrepreneurship. The Graham School of Business’s General Business Component assures that graduates have the solid foundation in business practices to succeed in a variety of careers and fields.

**MEDICAL HUMANITIES, B.A.**

Students who study the Medical Humanities receive an intentionally interdisciplinary education which fulfills the requirements for prior course work at most medical schools while at the same time emphasizing the traditional liberal arts. The major is designed to provide students with an understanding of the complexity of health and healing, the impact of scientific medicine on society at large, the tools to evaluate and analyze metrics of wellness, and the ability to utilize disparate techniques of critical thinking and textual interpretation.

The major is ideal for those wishing to do work in the medical fields while allowing for a broad education across the non-science oriented areas of study.
Our Minors

**PHILOSOPHY MINOR**

The Philosophy minor introduces students to the variety of areas of philosophical inquiry while developing the critical and creative skills central to philosophical analysis. Students develop an understanding of many of the great philosophers, major philosophical issues, and methods of philosophical inquiry that shape our most fundamental forms of reflection upon human life and conduct. The minor in Philosophy is intended to broaden the student’s education, to complement and encourage creative reflection in other courses and major programs, and to encourage the student’s ability to think logically and ethically, useful in any professional environment.

**CRITICAL THINKING AND THEORY MINOR**

Critical thinking is the process of carefully examining an issue in order to come to a reasoned judgment based on a critical evaluation of relevant reasons. Mastering critical thinking is a core outcome of higher education and employers highly value the capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems. Students who elect this minor will be challenged to master the basics of critical thinking and writing and then are given the option of pursuing one of two tracks focusing on either rhetoric, logic and critical thinking (the art of argument) or the social and cultural dimensions of knowledge construction and constitution.

**ETHICS MINOR**

From the time of Plato the Western world has been struggling with questions about what one ought to do in a given situation, how a right action is determined, and what makes someone a good person. Today it seems like there is always another ethical scandal in business, in health care, in the political system, or in the justice system and many are calling for increased attention to ethics education. The student who takes the Ethics minor will have the opportunity to examine issues as varied as cheating in classes, genetic engineering, marketing to specific demographics, as well as the rich history of ethical theories in the West.

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES MINOR**

The Religious Studies minor introduces students to a variety of methods and theories appropriate to the academic study of religion. Through examination of major religious traditions, texts, and themes, students gain an understanding of the complex ways that religions have influenced, and have been influenced by cultures. The knowledge and skills gained in the Religious Studies minor can complement a range of majors, helping students to think critically, creatively, and sensitively about the religions and cultures that surround them. Ultimately, students who minor in Religious Studies are better prepared to live and work in a religiously diverse world.
Dr. Rory Kraft (rкраft1@ycp.edu)
Professor Kraft works primarily in ethical and applied ethics (specifically medical/bioethics and business ethics). He has additional interests in aesthetics, 19th and 20th century German philosophy, and philosophy with children. He is co-editor of the journal *Questions: Philosophy for Young People* and is currently working on a collection of materials related to the Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Adult Male Negro.

Dr. Christa Shusko (cshusko@ycp.edu)
Professor Shusko’s research and teaching interests include the history of religion, specifically in the American context, religion and sexuality, religion and utopia, and religious conceptions of time. Her broader interests include the history of the academic study of religion. Recent presentations include "The Violence of Love: Eros, Transgression, and Religion in Georges Bataille" and "Master(Mistress)/Slave: Reading Power and Dialectic in Hegel and Masoch."

Dr. Greg Stoutenburg (gstoutenburg@ycp.edu)
Professor Stoutenburg specializes in epistemology, with substantial overlapping interests in philosophy of language, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind. His interests in epistemology are broad, but mostly concerns the nature of knowledge, how our talk about knowledge works, what it is to be reasonable in believing something, and the concept of luck.

Dr. Victor Taylor (vetaylor@ycp.edu)

Dr. Dennis Weiss (dweiss@ycp.edu)
Professor Weiss has interests in philosophical anthropology, philosophy of technology, and the posthuman. He is the editor of *Interpreting Man* and co-editor of *Design, Mediation, and the Posthuman* and has published articles on human nature, the digital culture, and human enhancement technologies. He’s written a number of essays exploring the intersections of popular culture, media, and philosophy.

Our Adjunct Faculty
- Dr. David Layman
- Dr. David Bradnick
- Dr. Chris Rodkey
- Mr. Richard Cleary
What skills does studying philosophy develop?
- generate ideas on a variety of problems
- formulate and solve problems
- uncover assumptions and suggest alternatives
- ability to distinguish subtle differences without overlooking similarities
- analyze, develop and formulate logical arguments
- capability to make knowledgeable decisions, examining thoroughly the consequences of various actions
- aptitude to examine various angles of topics
- ability to write and speak clearly and effectively interpret and assess various thoughts and theories

Leave your preconceptions at the door! Philosophy delivers highly marketable, highly transferable skills. If your ideal career requires thinking, talking, or writing, we'll help you prepare. (Like these famous philosophy majors, or these.)

**Do Philosophy Majors Make Any Money?** Your parents might have worried when you chose philosophy as a major. But graduates in philosophy earned 103.5% more about 10 years post-commencement. ([Story](#), [Data](#))

**Mark Cuban says Philosophy may soon be worth more than Computer Science** To remain competitive, Cuban advises ditching degrees that teach specific skills and opting for degrees that teach you how to think in a big picture way, like philosophy.

**If you want to run the world, study a 'useless' subject** "As robots take over routine jobs, we need people who can think creatively, imaginatively, logically, and laterally. Acquiring a narrow 'skillset' of the kind society increasingly demands will, in fact, leave students not equipped for the future, but vulnerable to it."

**A Harvard Medical School Professor Makes the Case for Philosophy** "What a continuously giving gift philosophy has been... If you can extract, and abstract, underlying assumptions or superordinate principles, or reason through to the implications of arguments, you can identify and address issues in a myriad of fields."

**Smart Students Study What They Love** Information is easy to acquire, and much will soon be obsolete. What is valuable is not the *content* of a major, but rather the ability to *think with and through* that information.

**The Rise in Stock of Philosophy Graduates** Figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency show philosophy graduates are in growing demand from employers.

**The Management Myth** Most of management theory is inane, writes the founder of a consulting firm. If you want to succeed in business, don’t get an M.B.A. Study philosophy instead.

**The Rise in Stock of Philosophy Graduates** Figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency show philosophy graduates are in growing demand from employers.

**Why Some M.B.A.s are Reading Philosophy** Courses like "Why Capitalism?" push students to ponder business in a broader context, and address a common complaint of employers, who say recent graduates are trained to solve single problems but miss the big picture.

**Study of Philosophy Makes Gains Despite Economy** In an era in which chronic unemployment seems to demand hard skills, some students are turning to an ancient study that they say prepares them not for a job, but for the *multiple* jobs they expect to hold during their lifetimes.
Career Opportunities
Philosophy is the ultimate "transferable work skill." With its emphasis on reason and argumentation, philosophy is an excellent preparation for a career in law, religion, business, international diplomacy, social work, medical management or writing as well as post-graduate education.

For more information about careers, go to the following:

- Forbes Magazine: "Why Your Board Needs A Chief Philosophy Officer" (03/09/18)
- Report on earnings: Humanities Indicators (published 2018)
- "A Wall Street Giant Makes a $75 Million Bet on Academic Philosophy" (New York Times, 01/16/18)
- "Six Myths About Choosing a College Major" (New York Times, 11/03/17)
- CNBC: "Tech has a big talent gap, and companies are hiring philosophy majors" (11/16/17)
- "For philosophy majors, the question after graduation is: What next?" (Washington Post, 6/20/17)
- "Value of Philosophy" (Daily Nous Website)
- “Philosophy is a Great Major”
- "Best Careers for Philosophy Majors" (Bestcolleges.com)
- "Good News Liberal Arts Majors" (Wall Street Journal, 9/11/16)
- "A Harvard Medical School professor makes the case for the liberal arts and philosophy" (Washington Post, 12/24/15)
- "Shine on Medical School Applications Without a Pre-Med Major" (US News and World Report, 8/12/15)
- "If Students Are Smart, They'll Major in What They Love" (Chronicle of Higher Education, 5/23/15)
- Opposing Poll: American Institutes for Research study shows that a humanities degree does not result in higher career wages.
- "NON-SCIENCE MAJORS AND MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS: STANDING OUT AMONG THE APPLICANT POOL" (Gap Medics blog post, 1/13/14)
- "Be employable, study philosophy" (Salon, 7/1/13)
- "On the Benefits of a Philosophy Major" (Please and Excuses (blog), 9/6/2012)
- "Revenge of the Liberal Arts Major" (Upstart Business Journal, 5/12/12)
- "Where the Smart Students Are" (NYTimes, 8/23/10)
- "Best and Worst Jobs 2010" -- Being a philosopher is #11 (Wall Street Journal, 1/5/10)
- "Philosophy is Back in Business" (Bloomberg, 1/12/10)
- "In a New Generation of College Students, Many Opt for the Life of the Mind" (NY Times, 4/6/08)
- "I think, therefore I earn" (Guardian, 11/20/07)
- "Philosophers Find the Degree Pays Off in Life and Work" (NY Times, 12/26/97)
**The Power of Philosophy**

**Mean GRE Scores by Intended Graduate Field, 2011-2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Analytical Writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Literature</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art History</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>157</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>157</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>148</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>148</td>
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**Mean LSAT and GMAT Scores by Intended Undergraduate Major**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Philosophy</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>English Literature</th>
<th>Biology</th>
<th>Art History</th>
<th>Political Science</th>
<th>Psychology</th>
<th>Sociology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LSAT</td>
<td>157.4</td>
<td>157.4</td>
<td>156.2</td>
<td>155.9</td>
<td>155.2</td>
<td>154.8</td>
<td>154.2</td>
<td>153.7</td>
<td>152.5</td>
<td>151.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMAT</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Do Philosophy Majors Make Any Money?**

**Annual Salaries and Salary Growth by Undergraduate Major**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Median Salary of Mid-Career Graduates with Higher Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>$98,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>$93,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>$92,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>$79,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>$78,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>$77,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>$71,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>$61,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Literature</td>
<td>$64,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art History</td>
<td>$61,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>$60,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>$58,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Salary Growth Increase from Starting to Mid-Career Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>103.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>103.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>96.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art History</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Literature</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I took EVERYTHING I ever learned from philosophy and have been applying it for going on 3 years in my current after college work-life. That is a sentence I never thought would come out of my mouth- better yet a thought that I never thought would exist in my head. I am currently the Director of Customer Service and Sales for the 2nd fastest growing privately held small business in the Philadelphia Metro area (as determined by the Philadelphia Business Journal in conjunction with UPenn Wharton School of Business). Everyday I try and, so far, succeed at using my grounding in Philosophy to better manage my staff.” John Serrantino Class of 06

- Aaron Arndt, ‘04, --Associate at Foley Bezek Behle & Curtis, LLP
- Steven Barnhart, ‘96--Intelligence Communications, Senior Airman, U.S. Air Force.
- John Braught ’06--M.A. program Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL) in Leuven, Belgium
- Bonnie Eskridge ‘03--M.A. Program in Literacy, Technology, and Professional Writing at Northern Arizona University
- Jessica Kyle, ’07--Ph.D. Program, SUNY Binghamton
- Brian Lonergan, ’04, --M.A. Program. West Chester University, IRS
- McKenzie Raver, ‘16, —Glatfelter Paper Company
- Leo Phillips, ‘16, —Teach for America
- Andre Mason, ‘12, —Business Analyst, Covex LLC
- Matt McManmonn, ’06, —Strategic Sourcing & Procurement at The Walt Disney Company
- Caanen Churukha, ‘14, —Licensed Social Worker

“I accepted a position at the PA House of Representatives in June. I work as a research analyst for the Finance Committee and am enjoying the experience….I have found, as one would expect, that having a general understanding of government has been helpful. However, ironically, or naturally, depending on one’s approach, it is philosophy that has been the greatest asset to me here. The critical thinking skills I have developed at York have proved invaluable.” Chase Schaszberger
"I took...epistemology at YCP in the late 90s. It was one of the most satisfying courses I've ever taken and put me on the path to a BA in philosophy.... I got my graduate degree in Organizational Management, but my background in philosophy has been as much of an asset as my MA in that it taught me how to step back and think about things before acting on them.” John Howard

- Brian Medina, ’06--Residential Life Director, Franklin Pierce College
- Marc Miller, ‘00--Archivist for Philadelphia Fight, MLA Program University of PA
- Jamie Ray, ‘96--Center for Disability Law and Policy
- Julie Schneider, ’02--Spanish Instructor, M.Ed. Program Saint Joseph’s University
- Evan Smith, ’05--InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
- Samuel Waddell, ’00--Adjunct Writing Instructor, York College
- Jeremy Seman, ‘07—United Rentals
- Alexandra DeBonte, ‘17 —Penn State University School of Law
- Keith Wiley, ‘15, —Comcast NBCUniversal
- Jason Shirey, ‘99, —Judicial Law Clerk
- Katherine Stewart, ’10, —Library Specialist

"I wanted to sincerely thank you for the education I received while studying philosophy. I didn’t fully realize the enormous benefits I would realize from it. It took me about 3 months after graduation to secure a job, but when I did, I was able to flourish. I’ve been with United Rentals now since March of 2007 after graduating in December of 2006. I have a blast at what I do, despite the occasional crack about how I should be working at a Starbucks with a degree like Philosophy.” Jeremy Seman

"I am now four weeks into my semester and I have already noticed what an important role my philosophy background has played in helping me get through the first month of classes. I have seen a ton of overlap from our philosophy of law course last semester, but even beyond that class I feel like I have really been able to get through my readings and analyze them far better than I ever could have imagined.” Alexandra DeBonte

"I would trade all of my technology for an afternoon with Socrates.”

Steve Jobs, CEO, Apple Computer Co. (Newsweek, Oct. 29, 2001)