Philosophy

Degree Designation: BA

Mission Statement

We strive to teach the student the best thought and literature in philosophy. The study of philosophy serves to develop intellectual abilities important for life as a whole, beyond the knowledge and skills required for any particular profession. Properly pursued, it enhances analytical, critical, and interpretive capacities that are applicable to any subject-matter, and in any human context. It 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. A good philosophical education enhances the capacity to participate responsibly and intelligently in public life.

Student Learning Outcomes

Content / Discipline Skills

- Describe the contributions of major philosophers and some of the central theories and arguments in the major sub-fields of philosophy--logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics;
- Describe the range of reasoning techniques and methodologies used by philosophers;
- Identify major issues in contemporary philosophical debate and research;
- Conduct thorough and effective research;

Critical Thinking Skills

- Distinguish the essential features and underlying issues of a philosophical problem;
- Select and apply relevant frameworks and theories and texts in the analysis of philosophical problems;
- Develop, defend, and evaluate arguments, avoiding logical fallacies, methodological errors, rhetorical devices, unexamined conventional wisdom, unnoticed assumptions, vagueness, and superficiality;

Communication Skills

- Write and speak clearly and effectively;
- Discuss controversial issues in an honest and respectful manner.

Assessment Strategies

- Through a variety of mechanisms, including examinations, evaluation of written assignments, and the participation of all program majors in a capstone seminar, the faculty of the department of Philosophy will measure students’ achievement of the identified core learning outcomes. The results of the assessments will be used to improve student achievement and program effectiveness.