

# Philosophy

Philosophy addresses some of the most important questions human beings ever face, questions central to a true liberal arts education. These include: What are the limits of human knowledge? Do human beings have free will? Do we have immortal souls? Does God exist? What is the right ethical code to live by? What are the right political principles for our society? Most importantly, the study of philosophy develops one's analytical, critical, and interpretative skills. Because of this unique combination, philosophy is an excellent foundation for any career path, and philosophy has long been known to provide an especially good foundation for law, business, and public policy. The philosophy program is part of the Philosophy and Religious Department of Claremont McKenna College. The program also offers a major in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* which allows students to design a specialized course plan integrating philosophy with government and/or economics.

## Philosophy Major Requirements

Students who complete the philosophy major will gain both broad and in-depth knowledge of some of humanity's most crucial questions. Nine courses are required for the major, distributed as follows:

1. **An introductory course** numbered 59 or below
2. **Philosophy 95. Fundamentals of Logic**, or the equivalent. Students are advised to take this early in their course of study
3. **Philosophy 100A. Classical Philosophy**, or another course from the *History of Philosophy* group that focuses on Western philosophy before the 15th century
4. **Philosophy 100C. Early Modern Philosophy**, or another course from the *History of Philosophy* group that focuses on Western philosophy after

the 14th century and before the 20th century

5. **One course from the *Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Mind* group**
6. **One course from the *Ethics, Political Philosophy, and Value Theory* group**
7. **Two courses from any area, numbered 100 or above.**
8. **Philosophy 198. Senior Seminar**, to be completed in the senior year

## Philosophy and Public Affairs Major and Requirements

The major in Philosophy and Public Affairs (PPA) offers students the chance to combine a philosophical knowledge of how society *should* work with practical information from government and economics about how society *does* work. PPA may be taken as a major or as part of a double major. It may *not* be taken as a *dual major*, since it already involves interdisciplinary work in philosophy, government, and/or economics.

The major requires twelve courses distributed as follows:

1. **An introductory course in ethics or political philosophy.** *Philosophy 33. Political Philosophy*, and *Philosophy 34. Moral and Political Issues* satisfy this requirement. Exceptions will be made only with the approval of the Coordinator of the Major in Philosophy and Public Affairs.
2. **Philosophy 95. Fundamentals of Logic**, or the equivalent. Students are advised to take this early in their course of study, although this is not required
3. **One overview course of ethical theory or political philosophy numbered 100 or above**, to be approved in advance by the Coordinator of the Major in Philosophy and Public Affairs.
4. **One course from the *Ethics, Political Philosophy, and Value Theory* group**
5. **One course that is either from the *History* group or the *Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Mind* group**

6. One course from any philosophy group, numbered 100 or above
7. **Five courses in government and/or economics.** Students are urged to take courses in which they learn about issues that complement their philosophical education and to which philosophical analysis can usefully be applied.

8. **Philosophy 198, Senior Seminar**, to be completed in the senior year

For more information, consult Professor Rajezi, Coordinator of the major in Philosophy and Public Affairs. Please note that, as indicated in the section on general education requirements, PPA majors must take Government 20 and Economics 50 as general education requirements and these courses may not be counted toward the five-course PPA major requirement stated here.

Students who complete the full major in PPA may dual in other fields *except* government, philosophy and economics, since PPA already involves additional concentration in those areas.

### Senior Thesis in Philosophy and in Philosophy and Public Affairs

The senior thesis is a general education requirement and the capstone of a student's undergraduate education. Students must complete a senior thesis in at least one of their majors, under supervision of a faculty member who teaches within that major, unless granted a special exception.

Students who select a two-semester thesis complete a one-half credit or full credit thesis research course in the first semester and the senior thesis in the second semester. The senior thesis and the thesis research course may not be counted as courses in the major.

If PPA majors choose to write a thesis in PPA, they must work with a philosophy professor and should expect to produce a thesis with substantial philosophical content. They may do interdisciplinary work, though they may not write theses that are solely in government or economics.

## Special Options for Majors

### Dual Majors

Students who wish to supplement another major with substantial philosophical study are encouraged to complete a dual major. Students with a dual major in philosophy must take at least seven courses in philosophy distributed as follows:

1. **An introductory course** numbered 59 or below
2. **Philosophy 95. Fundamentals of Logic**, or the equivalent. Students are advised to take this early in their course of study, though that is not required.
3. **One course from the *History of Philosophy* group**
4. **One course from the *Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Mind* group**
5. **One course from the *Ethics, Political Philosophy, and Value Theory* group**
6. **One course from any area, numbered 100 or above.**
7. **Philosophy 198. Senior Seminar**, to be completed in the senior year

Students with a dual major including philosophy are encouraged to write their *senior thesis* on a topic in philosophy. For further information, see "Senior Thesis in Philosophy" above.

Please note the restrictions on honors in the major for students with a dual major under "Honors in Philosophy" below. For further information on dual majors and the requirements for the other discipline of the dual major, please check the appropriate sections of this catalog.

As noted above, ***PPA may not be taken as a dual major***, since it already involves interdisciplinary work in philosophy, government, and/or economics.

### Honors in Philosophy

To be eligible for honors in philosophy, students must complete a major in philosophy, earn a grade point average of 10.50 or better in major courses, and must be voted

honors by the members of the department.

Students with a *dual major* including philosophy who wish to be considered for *honors* in philosophy will only receive honors if they:

- have completed all requirements for a *full major* in philosophy and are granted honors, or
- qualify and receive honors in *both disciplines of their dual major*. See “Academic Honors at Graduation” for details.

### General Education Requirement Information

**Philosophy requirement:** all CMC courses numbered 59 and below fulfill the College’s general education requirement in philosophy. These courses vary in content. They may have a broad or narrow focus, and they may concentrate on the history of philosophy or specific philosophical topics. However, all general education courses have the following in common:

- they teach philosophical methods, including the skills of interpreting and evaluating arguments in a rigorous fashion;
- they apply these philosophical methods to multiple questions, problems, and topics; and they show how the methods can be applied to further topics outside the class;
- they discuss the value of applying philosophical methods to problems of all sorts. In particular, they discuss the way in which critical enquiry helps us find the truth, understand our own way of seeing the world, and engage in thoughtful deliberation with others.

**Philosophy majors:** for the general education requirement in the *social sciences* and the *humanities*, CMC students majoring in philosophy must take designated courses in three of the four fields of the social sciences (economics, government, history, and psychology), and in three of the four fields of the humanities (literature, philosophy, religious studies, and literature in a foreign

language). Philosophy majors with a dual or double major in either the humanities or the social sciences will be required to take an additional general education course in those categories. For further information, see “Academic Policies and Procedures.”

**Philosophy and Public Affairs majors:** Because PPA is an interdisciplinary major, special rules apply to its general education requirements. Students must take a total of six general education courses in the humanities and social sciences. These may be satisfied by taking either (1) three courses in the social sciences—including *Government 20* and *Economics 50*—and three in the humanities, or (2) four courses in the social sciences and two in the humanities. PPA majors may count one philosophy course numbered 59 and below as a general education course in the humanities. For further information, including information on dual majors, see “Academic Policies and Procedures.”

### Study Abroad

All CMC students have the opportunity to apply for study abroad during the sophomore or junior year. Students planning to study philosophy abroad should consult with the program coordinator in philosophy to determine which off-campus courses will be accepted by the Department.

### The Faculty

The program in Philosophy is part of the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. The following faculty members are part of the philosophy program:

**CMC Faculty:** Davis (coordinator, first semester), Hurley (on leave, first semester; coordinator, second semester), Kind (on leave, AY), Kreines, Obdrzalek, and Rajczi (coordinator, Philosophy and Public Affairs).

**Visiting Faculty:** Begby, Gardner, and Leon.

## Courses

### INTRODUCTORY

Courses numbered 59 and below meet the general education requirement in philosophy.

#### 30. Philosophical Questions. *Staff*

This course offers an introduction to philosophy. Some instructors focus primarily on historical texts, while others focus on contemporary readings; some survey a range of philosophical questions, while others compare how different authors deal with one core topic. All courses focus on teaching philosophical methods, including the skills of interpreting and evaluating arguments in a rigorous fashion. Offered every semester.

#### 31. Philosophy Through Its History. *Staff*

This course serves as an introduction to philosophy focused on historical consideration of works by major philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, and Nietzsche. Recommended for students without previous background in philosophy. Offered every year.

#### 33. Political Philosophy. *Rajczi, Hurley*

This course challenges students to critically evaluate some of the most difficult political issues facing society. It provides an introduction to the problems themselves and to the logical methods that enable us to better resolve them. Specific topics may include: the source of governmental authority, economic and political rights, and international justice. The course may discuss abstract theories or specific political problems. Offered every other year.

#### 34. Moral and Political Issues. *Rajczi*

This course challenges students to critically evaluate some of the most difficult moral problems facing society. It provides an introduction to the problems themselves and to the logical methods that enable us to better resolve them. Specific topics may include: global poverty, war and terrorism, capital punishment, abortion, human cloning, environmental ethics, and animal rights. Offered every year.

#### 35. Knowledge, Mind, and Existence. *Kind*

This course introduces students to some of the fundamental philosophical problems concerning the nature of persons and our knowledge of the world around us. We start with questions about our knowledge of both the world around us and ourselves, which in turn leads to further questions about the self. How do we, as persons, fit into the overall world? We generally take ourselves to be importantly different from mere things like rocks and toasters: we have minds, and we also seem to have the capacity for free action. But what is the nature of the mind? And can our actions really be free? Offered every year.

#### 36. Philosophy of Religion. *Davis*

An examination of questions such as: (1) Can God's

existence be proved? (2) Is religious faith ever rationally warranted? (3) Are religious propositions cognitively meaningful? (4) Can one believe in a good, omnipotent God in a world containing evil? Readings from historical and contemporary sources. Also listed as Religious Studies 143. Offered every year.

#### 95. Fundamentals of Logic. *Kind*

An introduction to formal techniques for evaluating arguments. These techniques include truth tables, natural deduction for propositional logic, natural deduction for predicate logic, and introductory model theory. The goal of the course is not only for students to develop skill with these formal systems, but also for them to develop an understanding of what it means to reason logically. Offered every year.

### HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

#### 100A. Classical Philosophy. *Obdrzalek*

This course introduces students to some of the earliest, most profound and most influential thinkers in the Western philosophical tradition. The focus of the course is methodological, its goal to teach students skills which will enable them to develop their own interpretation and critiques of classical philosophical texts. We will focus on the works of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and the Skeptics. Some of the questions we will address will be what philosophy is, what one should aim at in life, what kinds of things exist, and what can be known. Offered every year.

#### 100C. Early Modern Philosophy. *Kreines*

This course serves as an introduction to philosophy during the 17th and 18th centuries, the beginning of the modern period. Readings are drawn from central works by philosophers such as Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. We will focus especially on epistemology (including skeptical and anti-skeptical arguments) and metaphysics (including issues concerning the nature of reality, the nature of the mind, freedom of the will, and the existence and nature of God) Offered every year.

#### 100D. 19th-Century Philosophy. *Kreines*

This course focuses on major figures in 19th-century European (post-Kantian) philosophy, including readings by Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and others. Topics will include theory of knowledge, morality, theology, and theories of freedom. Offered every other year.

#### 101B. Classical Ethical Theory: Plato. *Obdrzalek*

Plato is considered the first philosopher in the Western tradition to propose significant theories in ethics, moral psychology and political philosophy. This course will focus on a close reading of Platonic dialogues such as the *Protagoras*, the *Republic* and the *Statesman*. We will examine Plato's views on virtue and vice, psychological conflict, our moral obligations to others, and the political role of the philosopher. We will assess Plato's views for their philosophical merit, as well as discuss their influence on subsequent philosophers. Offered every third year.

**101C. Classical Ethical Theory: Aristotle. Obdrzalek**

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is one of the most significant texts in the history of philosophy; it has also proved enormously influential in 20th-century ethical theorizing. This course will focus on a close reading of Aristotle's *Ethics*. We will also assess Aristotle's views for their philosophical merit and discuss their relation to contemporary virtue ethics. Some topics we will focus on will be the relation of virtue to happiness, the role of intellectual activity in the good life, the doctrine of the mean, Aristotle's analysis of weakness of will, and the nature and significance of friendship. Offered every third year.

**101D. Classical Ethical Theory: Stoics, Skeptics and Epicureans. Obdrzalek**

How should I live my life? What are my moral obligations? How do I sustain my moral commitments in situations of temptation and duress? The Greek and Roman philosophers of the Hellenistic period (4th century BC to 2nd century AD) pursued these questions in one of the most vigorous and probing debates in the history of Western philosophy. The Stoics identified happiness with virtue, the Epicureans with pleasure, and the Skeptics with the acceptance of one's intellectual limitations. This course will focus on a close study of these three schools of philosophy. We will study the writings of figures ranging from Epictetus, a freed slave, to Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor. Offered every third year

**103. Nietzsche. Kreines**

An introduction to Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy. Topics include Nietzsche's accounts of the problem of nihilism, the eternal recurrence, the death of God, his critique of morality, and his perspectivism. The emphasis will be on Nietzsche's late works. Some discussion of interpretations of Nietzsche by later philosophers. Offered every other year.

**106. Kant. Kreines**

This course examines the philosophy of Kant. We pay special attention to Kant's influential masterpiece, the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Topics include the nature and limits of our knowledge, freedom of the will, and Kant's "transcendental idealism." Prerequisite: one previous course in philosophy or consent of instructor. Offered every other year.

**METAPHYSICS, EPISTEMOLOGY, AND PHILOSOPHY OF MIND****126. Metaphysics. Kind**

An introduction to the basic questions regarding existence: What is there? What is it like? Topics include the nature of the self and the mind, the existence of God, particulars and universals, necessity and possibility, the nature of truth and the possibility of free will. Prerequisite: at least one previous course in philosophy or permission of the instructor. Offered every other year.

**132. Philosophy of Cognitive Science. Kind**

Cognitive science is the study of cognition (and specific cognitive capacities, such as reasoning, perception, and language) by researchers in psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, computer science and philosophy. This course introduces the main issues involving the field's unifying concept: information processing. What does it mean to say the mind is a computer? What other models of information processing are there? How well do these models explain cognitive phenomena? Offered occasionally.

**133: Philosophy of Science. Staff**

The philosophical themes this course will investigate include: the scientific method, the difference between science and pseudoscience, explanation, the nature of scientific laws, the role of observation, confirmation and progress. Readings will bring together classic texts by Francis Bacon and René Descartes, as well as contemporary works by Carl G. Hempel, Sir Karl Popper, Thomas S. Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, W.V. Quine, Wesley Salmon, Nancy Cartwright, Hilary Putnam, and Bas C. van Fraassen. Offered occasionally.

**135: Philosophy of Mind. Kind**

An exploration of problems concerning the nature of the mind. The main topic of the course will be the mind-body problem: Is there a mind (or a soul) that is distinct from the body? Related topics include: What is the nature of consciousness? Can computers think? How can we know of the existence of other minds? Offered every other year.

**137. Skepticism. Staff**

Philosophers have challenged your most fundamental claims to knowledge: that your thoughts and utterances really have meaning (or the meanings you think they have), that your friends and neighbors have minds like yours, even that there really is a world outside your mind. Though the conclusion that you don't know these things appears ridiculous, some of the arguments are very hard to refute. Does this show philosophy is just an intellectual game? Or does the tension reveal something important about human existence? Offered every third year.

**139. Language and Reality. Kind**

An exploration of issues in the philosophy of language and, in particular, the relation between language and the world. Topics to be discussed include: the nature of meaning, the nature of thought, and the reference of proper names and definite descriptions. Readings will be drawn primarily from late 19th-century and 20th-century sources. Prerequisite: at least one previous course in philosophy or permission of instructor. Offered every other year.

**ETHICS, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, AND VALUE THEORY****158. Ethical Theory. Rajczi, Hurley**

This course will address the question "What makes an action moral or immoral?" In the process of answering it, students will be introduced to the techniques that philosophers use to resolve ethical problems and to

some of the greatest works of ethical philosophy in the Western canon, including works by Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill. Prerequisite: one previous course in philosophy. Offered every other year.

#### **160. Special Topics in Value Theory. Staff**

This course covers special topics in value theory, including special topics in ethical theory, applied ethics, political philosophy, and aesthetics. Course content changes each time the course is offered. Descriptive titles are often listed in the schedule of classes. Offered occasionally.

In 2007-2008, the topic was:

- **The Ethics of War and Peace.** This course introduces students to the subject of ethics in war and peace. Specifically, it (1) familiarizes them with the major theories of warfare ethics, including just war theory, pacifism, and realism, (2) considers historical examples and applies the principles of warfare ethics to them, and (3) challenges students to rethink and make consistent their own opinions on warfare ethic. Prerequisites: one previous course in philosophy, or permission of the instructor.

#### **165. Global Justice, World Poverty, and Human Rights. Rajczi**

This course introduces students to the subject of global justice by (i) familiarizing them with the major theories of domestic justice, (ii) exploring the ways in which political theorists have extended these theories to the global arena, and then (iii) challenging the students to re-think and make consistent their own opinions on such matters as global justice, world poverty, and human rights. Specific topics may include: global democracy, world governance, business and globalization, the distribution of wealth, the conduct of war, and terrorism. Prerequisite: one previous course in philosophy. Offered occasionally.

### **OTHER COURSES**

#### **176. Philosophy of Law. Hurley**

Participants in this course will first examine prominent theories of law, including positivism and recent variations upon natural law and legal realist approaches. We then proceed to the study of alternative approaches to statutory (including constitutional) interpretation, theories of tort law, and theories of punishment. Offered every third year.

#### **177. The Holocaust. Staff**

An interdisciplinary examination of the antecedents, realities, and implications of the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews. Also listed as Religious Studies 146. Offered occasionally.

#### **178. Theories of the Good Life. S. Smith**

An examination of views of the good life and how it may be achieved. The emphasis is upon ideal personal values and life styles. Readings from traditional and non-traditional sources. Students are asked to develop their

own views as to what constitutes the good life as they see it. Seniors only. Offered occasionally.

#### **181. Theories of History. Moss**

This course examines the nature of philosophy and history and their interrelations. Accounts of the past - including speculative philosophies of history - are considered critically in terms of the methodological problems they involve, the meaning of "explanation," "causal connection," "unit of interpretation," "historical generalization," and "objectivity" as distinguished from "subjectivity." Also listed as History 178. Offered occasionally.

#### **183. Aesthetics of Literature. Rajczi**

The principal question of the course is: what, if anything, makes one work of literature superior to another? Readings are varied, and may include classic and modern philosophical work on aesthetics, the reflections of authors on how best to write, and specific works of fiction. Offered occasionally.

#### **185. Life, Death, and Survival of Death. Davis**

A study of philosophical and theological answers to questions about death and the meaning of life. Also listed as Religious Studies 144. Offered every other year.

#### **186. Bioethics. Rajczi**

An exploration of ethical issues arising in the biological sciences and in the practice of medicine. Topics discussed may include abortion, euthanasia, human experimentation, genetic and reproductive intervention, and allocation of scarce medical resources. Intended especially but not exclusively for juniors and seniors concentrating in pre-medicine, biology, or philosophy. Offered occasionally.

#### **187. Philosophical Roots of European Fascism. Staff**

An examination of the philosophical roots of European fascism, with emphasis on German and Italian thought. The fascist movement is considered as part of the Romantic rebellion against Enlightenment ideologies. The writings of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Croce, Gentile, and Hitler are studied. Also listed as Government 165e. Offered occasionally.

#### **198. Senior Seminar in Philosophy. Staff**

Readings and discussions centered around important topics of current philosophical interest. Required of Claremont McKenna College senior philosophy majors; admission to others by permission of instructor. Offered every fall semester.

#### **199. Independent Study in Philosophy. Staff**

Students who have the necessary qualifications and who wish to investigate an area of study not covered in regularly scheduled courses may arrange for independent study under the direction of a faculty reader. See "Academic Policies and Procedures" for details. Offered every semester.