

Philosophy

Sharon Ryan, Chair

Degree Offered *Bachelor of Arts*

Nature of Program

The Department of Philosophy is small, academically vibrant, student-centered, undergraduate program. Our mission is to provide an outstanding, liberal arts education with all the advantages of a large research University.

Philosophy students are trained to understand and to respond both critically and creatively to, philosophical problems, theories, and arguments. Philosophy students investigate fundamental questions that have puzzled human beings for ages. Philosophy deals with questions such as: What do we know and how do we know it? What is morally right and how should we live? What is the nature of the human mind and self? Is there a God and how might human beings know about God? What is the ideal form of government? What is the ultimate nature of reality?

The areas in which students receive instruction include logic, ethics, social-political philosophy, philosophy of law, theory of knowledge, philosophy of science, continental philosophy, metaphysics, history of ancient and modern philosophy, and philosophy of religion.

Because of the vigorous critical thinking students enjoy in a philosophy class, the study of philosophy provides very strong preparation for a wide range of careers including law, business, medicine, and journalism. Those who desire a career teaching philosophy in college will need the Ph.D. degree.

Philosophy is an especially strong major for students going to law school. We offer a pre-law area of emphasis within the philosophy major.

For students without any definite career plans, philosophy is an excellent major in that it provides skills essential for any career that requires clear communication, problem solving, strong writing, evaluation and/or creation of policies and procedures, comfort with complexity and disagreement, and careful and creative thinking.

Admission Requirements

Students who meet general admission requirements for the University are eligible to become pre-philosophy majors. Upon completion of 58 college credit hours with a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0, as well as a GPA of at least 2.0 in all courses completed in philosophy, students are eligible for admission to the degree program in philosophy.

Major Requirements

A degree in philosophy requires 30 hours in philosophy, including 18 hours of work at the 300 level or above. The following courses are required: PHIL 244, 248, 260, 301 or 302, 321 or 346, and 494 or 496. A grade of C or higher must be earned in required courses, and majors must possess at least a 2.0 average in all philosophy courses in order to graduate.

Students who decide to take PHIL 496 *Senior Thesis* instead of 494 *Junior-Senior Seminar* should make arrangements with a faculty member during the semester preceding the one in which he or she plans to write the thesis. Only students who have a 3.7 average or higher in philosophy courses are eligible to write the senior thesis. Ability to enroll in PHIL 496 will depend upon the availability of a faculty member who is able to work with the student, the student's level of preparation for successful completion of a thesis, and the student's submission of an appropriate proposal for the thesis.

Minor in Philosophy

Any student admitted to an undergraduate degree program at WVU may complete a minor in philosophy. The minor is designed to acquaint students with a broad range of philosophical topics and skills, and to introduce them to the fundamental issues in philosophy. The minor consists of 15 hours in philosophy, with at least nine hours at the upper level (300 level or above).

Pre-Law Area of Emphasis in Philosophy

Philosophy is an excellent preparation for law school. The course of study for the pre-law major includes all of the requirements for the philosophy major. In addition, pre-law students must take PHIL 130, 323, and 325.

Physics, Astronomy, and Physical Science

Earl E. Scime, Chair

Degrees Offered

Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science

Nature of Program

There are two degree options for students in physics. The bachelor of science is designed for students committed to a career in research and is typically followed by graduate work in physics, chemistry, materials science, optical sciences, astrophysics, engineering, or in other physical sciences such as meteorology, oceanography, etc. Some students accept positions in industry or in a government laboratory immediately after completing the B.S. This degree program provides a comprehensive grounding in the fundamentals of physics and is usually accompanied by participation in one of the active research programs within the department. One important area of emphasis for physics majors pursuing a B.S. is computational physics (a combination of physics and computer science).

The bachelor of arts degree is more flexible. By allowing more free elective choices, it prepares a student for a career that combines a science background with subsequent professional training. Typical career paths for this degree program include secondary education, medical school, patent law, forensics, health, physics, environmental engineering, journalism, government policy, and business management.

The courses in physics provide a mix of theoretical concepts and practical examples. Each course within a degree plan builds upon the knowledge base acquired in previous courses and, together, these courses allow a student to acquire the combination of physical insight and mathematical skill needed for success in today's demanding job markets.

The department also offers introductory survey courses in physics and astronomy which are of interest to a broad range of students in the social sciences, fine arts, humanities, health sciences, and education. These courses use a minimum of mathematics to introduce the principles of physics and they provide many examples from the "real world" of the environment, energy, space, communications, transportation, and medicine.

Admission Requirements

Admission to the B.A. and to the B.S. in physics programs requires, in addition to college requirements, at least a 2.5 GPA in all required introductory physics and mathematics courses (which must include PHYS 111, 112, MATH 155, 156, 251, and 261 or their equivalents).

Degree Requirements

The B.A. degree requires a minimum of 128 hours. This includes: 31 hours of University requirements (GEC and Capstone); 15 hours of Eberly College of Arts and Sciences requirements (language and fine arts); and 55 hours in physics department requirements (31 in physics, eight in science, 16 in mathematics). Continuance in the program requires that the student maintain at least a cumulative 2.2 GPA in all physics and mathematics courses. Specific course requirements are, in physics: Orientation 199 (physics section), PHYS 111, 112, 314, 331, 333, 341 (2 hrs.), and nine hours of electives. In mathematics: MATH 155, 156, 251, 261. In science: eight hours from biology, chemistry, computer science and/or geology. In addition students have at least 27 hours of unrestricted free electives which can be used to prepare for entry into a professional program (teaching, law, medicine, other physical sciences, for example) or into the job market.

The B.S. degree requires a minimum of 128 hours. This includes: 31 hours of University requirements (GEC and Capstone); and 71 hours in physics department requirements (44 in physics, eight in one other science, 19 in mathematics). The student must maintain at least a 2.2 cumulative GPA in all physics and mathematics courses in order to continue in the program. Specific course requirements are, in physics: Orientation 199 (physics section), PHYS 111, 112, 314, 331, 333, 332 or 334, 341 (two semesters), 451, 461, plus 12