

Philosophy and Religion

at Arcadia University

Global Perspective...Personal Attention...Real-World Integrative Learning Experiences

Faculty

Professor

Dr. Finbarr O'Connor (Chair)

Assistant Professor

Dr. Richard Arras

Degree

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

Minors

Philosophy
Religion

Related Graduate Study at Arcadia University

Master of Arts in Humanities with
Concentrations in History, International
Studies, Philosophy or Religion (See
Graduate Catalog.)

Pathways to Study Abroad

Philosophy majors are expected to spend a semester or year studying overseas. Exciting opportunities are available through Arcadia's College of Global Studies and are relatively easy to arrange. With prior approval, courses taken at foreign universities can be transferred to Arcadia to fulfill Undergraduate Curriculum requirements, including major requirements. A list of Philosophy and Religion courses that transfer is available from the Chair of the Department.

Generally, the sophomore and junior years are the most convenient time for Arcadia students to study abroad, although the second semester of the freshman year and the first semester of the senior year also are possibilities.

Arcadia University has special arrangements with universities or runs its own programs in China, England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Australia, France, Greece, Italy, India, Ireland, South Africa, Spain, New Zealand and Tanzania.

Visit the University's website for Pathways to Study Abroad (www.arcadia.edu/pathways). Since it is important that students plan ahead for study abroad, they should consult with their advisers as soon as possible and make their intentions known to the Department Chair and the Associate Dean of International Affairs.

About the B.A. in Philosophy

- Preparation for graduate school
- Preparation for teaching
- Preparation for careers in law, journalism, and more
- Opportunities to study abroad at some of the top universities in the world

Philosophy—the pursuit of wisdom—traditionally has been a steppingstone to graduate school and teaching at the college level. A major in Philosophy is also an asset for graduate work in law, journalism, diplomacy, civil service and management.

Students study methods of philosophical inquiry, the nature of knowledge, theories of reality and human nature, freedom and determinism, and the status of values.

The Philosophy degree offers a balanced introduction to philosophy as both a theoretical and applied discipline. Effort is made to show the relationships of philosophical thought to art, education, history, literature, mathematics, religion, science, and current events.

Minor in Religion: A Religion minor offers an opportunity for academic study as well as personal exploration of religion. The minor is based on a widely accepted, two-fold definition of religion: "religion" as an organized belief, practice or institution, and "religion" as ultimate concern, which is the fundamental basis of all reality, giving meaning to life out of personal conviction and commitment.

Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

(32 credits as listed below, plus Undergraduate Curriculum requirements and electives to total 128)

Eight courses in Philosophy

- PL 150 Introduction to Philosophy
 - PL 155 Applied Logic
 - or PL 160 Symbolic Logic
 - PL 175 Ethics
 - PL 308 The Greek Mind
 - PL 310 20th Century Philosophy
 - or PL 309 Modern Philosophy
 - PL 499 Senior Project
- Two Philosophy electives

Requirements for the Minor in Philosophy

(20 credits as listed below)

Five courses in Philosophy

- PL 150 Introduction to Philosophy
 - PL 155 Applied Logic
- Three Philosophy electives, chosen by the Department on the basis of individual interests and needs

Requirements for the Minor in Religion

(20 credits as listed below)

Introductory course

- RE 101 Exploring Religion (required of all minors)

Religion and Culture courses

- RE 322 Religion and Personality: The Psychology of Religion
- RE 328 The Future in Science and Religion
- RE 113 Contemporary Religious Problems
- RE 317 Religion and Its Expression in Literature

Scripture courses

- RE 115 Understanding the Old Testament
- RE 116 Jesus and His Contemporaries:

- RE 117 Understanding the New Testament Essentials of Judaism

World Religions course

- RE 114 Living Religions of the World

University Seminar Courses (US)

208

Great Trials in History

(4 credits)

This University Seminar explores a dozen famous trials chosen to represent conflicts in different areas of intellectual and cultural/social history including philosophy, religion, science, art, and literature. Subjects include Socrates, Galileo, the Salem Witch Trials, John Brown, Oscar Wilde, the Scopes Monkey Trial, Nuremberg, and Robert Mapplethorpe. Texts include books, films, articles, and websites.

NOTE: US 208 can count toward the Criminal Justice, History, and Philosophy and Religion majors and minors.

214

Evolution: Conflicts from Darwin to ID

(4 credits)

This course examines the conflicts raised by the theory of evolution, from the reception of *Origin of Species* in the 1860s, to the Scopes Trial in the 1920s, the legal struggle over scientific creationism in the 1980s, and the appearance of intelligent design in the 2000s and the Dover, Pa., trial in 2005. The course surveys evidence from paleontology (the fossil record) and genetics and explores scientific objections and difficulties such as the blending inheritance problem, rudimentary organs problem, the "missing link," and others. In addition, the course considers the origin of American fundamentalism in connection with the Scopes trial, the rise of Social Darwinism and the spread of eugenic ideas.

NOTE: US214 can count toward the Philosophy major and minor and the Religion minor.

230

International Computer Ethics

(4 credits)

This University Seminar examines the ethical consequences of the expansion of computer usage in our society and internationally. The course aims to give students a solid grounding in ethics in general and the ethical dilemmas which are unique to computer applications.

Philosophy and Religion at Arcadia University

NOTE: US 230 can count toward the Computer Science or Computing Technology majors and minors and the Philosophy major and minor.

333

Rites of Passage
(4 credits; Fall)

This course explores maturity and learning about life, with a particular focus on wisdom and how we can be guided by it. Topics explored are: attitudes, expectations, identity, maturity, virtue and the search for meaning, purpose, love, friendship, and direction. The focus is on each main character's rite of passage and the challenges that come at particular age junctures. Authors include Jane Austen, James Baldwin, Ian McEwan, Arthur Miller, Per Petterson, and Oscar Wilde. Wisdom texts include: the Daodejing, The Holy Bible, and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. **Note:** US 333 can count toward the Religion minor.

Philosophy Courses (PL)

150

Introduction to Philosophy
(4 credits; Fall, Spring)

This course introduces the methods of philosophical inquiry. It includes the nature of knowledge, theories of reality and human nature, freedom and determinism, and the status of values. It incorporates lecture and discussion.

155

Applied Logic
(4 credits; Spring)

This course is a Study of the principles and strategies of reasoning drawn from informal logic and problem-solving. This course includes methods of problem representation, tree diagrams and arguments, classical syllogistic logic, fallacies, argument construction and evaluation. It incorporates lecture, discussion and practice in techniques.

160

Symbolic Logic
(4 credits, day; Fall)
(3 credits, evening)

This course studies symbolic logic from sentential logic to the logic of quantifiers and relations. It introduces truth tables, truth trees, natural deduction, elementary theorems of consistency and completeness. It includes lecture, discussion and extensive practice exercises in pertinent techniques.

165

Occupational Ethics
(4 credits; Fall, Spring)

This consideration of the role of values and ethical principles in the workplace includes general issues of business practice (for example, corporate responsibility, truth in advertising, treatment of employees) and also issues raised by some specific professional practices, especially health-care professions (for example, regulation by codes, ideas of informed consent, allocation of scarce resources, confidentiality).

175

Ethics
(4 credits; Fall, Spring)

This course is an examination of theories of the nature, function and ground of moral judgment is through the works of such philosophers as Aristotle, Hume, Mill and Kant. It includes contemporary value conflicts (e.g., capital punishment, abortion, truth telling) and incorporates lecture and discussion.

US 208

Great Trials in History—See listing above under University Seminar Courses.

US 214

Evolution: Conflicts from Darwin to ID
(4 credits; Spring)

See listing above under University Seminar Courses.

223

Philosophy in Literature
(4 credits; Spring)

This is a study of basic philosophical issues such as the nature of aesthetic pleasure, differences between philosophical and literary writing, the "truth" of fiction, and others, as expressed in two significant movements: the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry in classical Athens (Plato vs. the tragedians) and existentialism in 20th century France (Camus, Sartre). Offered in odd years.

Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.

US 230

International Computer Ethics—See listing above under University Seminar Courses.

245

Political Thought
(4 credits; Fall)

This survey of political theory is through the classic writings of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Bentham, Marx, Mill, Rawls and others. Topics include law and rights, the public interest, social contract, liberty, equality, and justice. Offered in odd years.

Philosophy and Religion at Arcadia University

275

Ethics in Film

(4 credits; Fall)

An exploration of how all the basic ethical perspectives, such as egoism, relativism, utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue theory, can be found in and illustrated by films. Some specific ethical dilemma paradigms, such as truth versus loyalty, individual versus community, justice versus mercy, are examined. About 12 films are assigned, some to be viewed in class and some out of class. Students do a mid-term and a final exam, two formal papers and other informal writing. Offered in even years.

305

Ethics of War

(4 credits, Spring)

Topics include arguments for and against pacifism, the development of just war theory from Augustine to Walzer, and conventions of international law as applied to certain issues of modern war (strategic bombing, weapons of mass destruction, declarations of war, terrorism, guerilla war, hostage taking, espionage, rights of prisoners of war, and methods of interrogation.

For upper- level students and graduate students; reading, discussion, tests, presentations, and papers. Offered in odd years.

308

The Greek Mind

(4 credits; Spring)

This course is an overview of the roots of Western philosophy from the pre-Socratic period through Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and leading Hellenistic thinkers. It incorporates lecture and discussion. Offered every third year.

309

Modern Philosophy

(4 credits; Fall)

This survey of philosophy is from the 17th through the 19th centuries, from Bacon to Nietzsche. It includes the responses to the scientific revolution, the roots of rationalism and empiricism and the romantic reaction of the 19th century. Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel. Offered every third year.

310

20th Century Philosophy

Not regularly scheduled.

320

Philosophy of Science

Not regularly scheduled.

330

Understanding Knowledge and the Mind

(4 credits; Spring)

This course studies theories of knowledge (skepticism, rationalism, empiricism, pragmatism), and theories of mind (dualist, materialist, functionalist) and associated concepts such as action, thinking, representation and consciousness. It presents readings from both classic and contemporary sources. Offered every third year.

Prerequisite: Junior standing.

US 333

Rites of Passage—See listing above under University Seminar Courses.

355

How Do We Know What We Know? Truth, Media, Politics

(4 credits; Fall)

This course combines epistemology, philosophy of science, and the ethics of journalism. The focus is on the relationship between the problems philosophers discuss when they think of issues of truth and knowledge and the problems journalists have as they go about their profession. How do voters know what they are getting when they vote for a candidate—in an era of spin rooms, sophisticated, poll-driven ads, "gotcha" questions—and when the voting public is segmenting into ever narrower politically defined niches.

389

Independent Study

The course is a research project on a major philosopher selected according to individual interests and needs. It provides direction in critical, analytical, argumentative and creative approaches.

Prerequisites: Four courses in Philosophy and permission of the instructor.

499

Senior Project

(4 credits; Fall, Spring)

Independent study of major works selected from classical and contemporary philosophies.

Religion Courses (RE)

101

Exploring Religion

(4 credits; Fall, Spring)

This systematic approach to the diversity and significance of religion explores what religion is and how it is studied. It considers myth, ritual, belief, scripture, art and the spectrum of the world's religions. It investigates issues such as the problem of God, death and last things, evil

Philosophy and Religion at Arcadia University

and suffering, paths to salvation, religion and group identity, and religion and technology.

113

Contemporary Religious Problems

(4 credits; Fall)

This introduction to religious ethics uses resources of theology, natural and social sciences in seeking solutions to contemporary dilemmas of personal life and society. It explores specific problems determined by interests of the class. Possible topics include sexual conduct, abortion, racial, ethnic and sexist prejudice, employment, business and medical ethics, pacifism and future religion.

114

Living Religions of the World

(4 credits; Fall, Spring)

This course provides an introduction to the new pluralistic landscape that brought their own living religions to America. The course focuses on Buddhism, and Islam as they are practiced in America as they encounter modernity and postmodernity. There are visits, guest speakers, and readings the student is expected to undertake with a practitioner or an insider. A research project is required that seeks to understand these traditions in today's global world and includes face-to-face interviews. 115

Understanding the Hebrew Bible

(4 credits; Fall, Spring)

This is a study of the Hebrew Scriptures through assigned readings in the English translation. Class lectures and discussions emphasize understanding of the text in the context of the historical background as well as the genre of literature in which each individual book was written. A summary review of the content and basic intent of each book is considered as well as its placement in the whole collection of books traditionally accepted as the Old Testament.

116

Jesus and His Contemporaries: Understanding the New Testament

(4 credits, Spring)

This course explores the birth of Christianity out of ancient Judaism against the background of Roman government and Hellenistic culture. The New Testament is viewed as a series of attempts to present the impact of Jesus of Nazareth in terms of Greek rationality and the impact of Hebraic commitment to history as the matrix of meaning.

117

Essentials of Judaism: Major Beliefs and Practices

(4 credits, Spring)

This study of the development of Rabbinic Judaism as an outgrowth of Biblical civilization considers major value concepts of Rabbinic Judaism: God, Israel, Torah; faith and reason; nationality and universality; and Messianism.

118

Judaism Through the Ages

Not regularly scheduled.

119

Understanding Islam

(4 credits)

This course studies the religion of Islam. Students learn about the birth and evolution of the faith, its basic tenets, concepts of God, prophets, leaders, sects, practices and rituals, offshoots, and schools of law.

224

History of Christian Thought

Not regularly scheduled.

225

Contemporary Religious Thought

Not regularly scheduled.

317

Religion and Its Expression in Literature

Not regularly scheduled.

322

Religion and Personality: The Psychology of Religion

Not regularly scheduled.

325

How Climate Change, Geography Shape Religion

(4 credits; Fall)

The course explores the impact of climate change, geography, and technology on religion from 11,000 BCE to 200 BCE utilizing scientific methodologies such as climatology, ethnobotany, biological anthropology, archeology, evolutionary psychology, and cultural ecology. Issues include the global warming at the end of the ice age, the development of agriculture and subsequent population explosion, the emergence of religious elites, megaliths to honor the dead, and urban life. The course then examines the crisis of meaning that occurs in the age of empires and the emergence of the concept of individual salvation during the Axial Age. Finally, the course speculates, as we enter into the age of information and the potential of a new period of global warming, as to the impact of climate change, social media, and new technologies on the character of religion.

Philosophy and Religion at Arcadia University

Prerequisite: It is recommended that one Religion course be taken or a course in Biology, Psychology, Sociology, or Anthropology.

326

The Dawn of Humanity and the Origins of Religious Experience

(4 credits)

The course examines evidence for the earliest forms of religious experience that mark the appearance of Homo sapiens in the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. This evidence is explored from a multidisciplinary approach including cognitive and evolutionary psychology, biological anthropology, neuroscience, archeology, archeoastronomy, and art history. A key consideration is the cognitive evolution of the brain and the power of brain to harness its own spiritual energy and power. Among the themes of the earliest manifestations of religious experience to be studied are archaic burial rites, Venus figurines, cave paintings, shamanism, and burial mounds and henges. The link between these early forms of religious experience and later forms of religion will be outlined.

Prerequisites: One Religion course as well as a major in Biology, Psychology or Anthropology or permission from the instructor.

328

The Future in Science and Religion

Not regularly scheduled.

356

Topics in Biblical Studies

Not regularly scheduled.

389

Independent Study

This course is individual research at an advanced level on a religious topic of special interest. It provides the opportunity to develop research methodology under the supervision of the instructor. It combines the collection and analysis of data, the summary and evaluation of results, and effective organization and presentation.

Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.