Philosophy and Religion

at Arcadia University

Global Perspectives…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 Fields of Study
Students can earn a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree and preparation for certification in Elementary Education from Arcadia University and a Jewish Teaching Diploma from Gratz College.

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 encouraged to spend a semester or year studying overseas. Exciting opportunities are available through Arcadia's Center for Education Abroad 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 Web site for Pathways to Study Abroad (www.arcadia.edu/pathways) and suggested course sequences. 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 Director of International Services.

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—has traditionally 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.

Jewish Education: In cooperation with Gratz College, Arcadia also offers a special program

in Jewish Education. Students receive a B.A. degree and preparation for certification in Elementary Education from Arcadia University, and a Jewish Teaching Diploma from Gratz College.

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
PL	399	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

Four 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: Understanding the New Testament
RE	117	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 Web sites.
NOTE: US 208 can count toward the Criminal Justice, History and Philosophy majors and minors.

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

Study includes the principles and strategies of reasoning drawn from informal logic and problem-solving. This course includes methods of problem representation, decision making, 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
(3 credits; Fall, Spring)

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 healthcare professions (for example, regulation by codes, ideas of informed consent, allocation of scarce resources, confidentiality).

175
Ethics
(4 credits; Fall, Spring)

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.

US208
Great Trials in History—See listing above under University Seminar Course.

223
Philosophy in Literature
(4 credits; Spring)

This study of basic philosophical issues as expressed in significant works of literature includes such leading figures of the 19th and 20th centuries as Nietzsche, Santayana, Kierkegaard, Sartre, Camus and others. Offered in odd years.
Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

US230
International Computer Ethics—See listing above under University Seminar Course.

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, Rawls and others. It includes rights, the public interest, social contract, liberty, equality and justice. Offered in odd years.

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 paradigms, 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.

308
The Greek Mind
(3 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; Spring)

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. 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.

389
Independent Study
Research project on a major philosopher is 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 and suffering, paths to salvation, religion and group identity, and religion and technology.

113
Contemporary Religious Problems
(4 credits; Fall)

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 introduction to religion in prehistoric and primitive cultures studies the major non-Western religions of the Near East and the Far East, with special attention to origins and development, beliefs, ethical standards and ritual practice. It includes lectures, discussion and individual research.

115
Understanding the Old Testament
(4 credits; Fall, Spring)

This is a study of the Hebrew Scriptures through assigned readings in the English translation of the Old Testament. 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 is an exploration of the birth of Christianity out of ancient Judaism against the background of Roman government and Hellenistic culture. It views the New Testament as a set of attempts to evaluate the impact of Jesus of Nazareth on human lives in terms of Greek rationality and the impact of Hebraic commitment on 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.

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, archeo-astronomy, 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

Individual research is 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.