

RU Interested in . . .

PHILOSOPHY

AT A GLANCE . . .

Department at RU:	Philosophy and Religious Studies
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Faculty Liaison:	Dr. Kim Kipling, Chair
College at RU:	College of Arts and Sciences
Degree Type:	Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science
Homepage:	http://www.radford.edu/~phre

AREA OF STUDY

The philosophy concentration within the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies provides students with a broad understanding of the history and dynamics of Western thought; a familiarity with the major branches of philosophy such as logic, ethics, and metaphysics; and an in-depth knowledge of some of the most important philosophers in the Western tradition. 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, and for life-long learning. The study of philosophy can profoundly affect both the thinking one does and the kind of person one is.

CAREER OPTIONS

As recent studies show, employers want, and reward, many of the abilities that the study of philosophy develops: to formulate and solve problems, to communicate effectively, to generate and organize ideas, to assess pros and cons, and to analyze and summarize complex data. Thus, while many philosophy majors choose to pursue a career in education, there are people trained in philosophy in just about every field: law, medicine, publishing, computer programming, marketing, public relations, social work, and government service.

QUESTIONS STUDENTS OFTEN ASK

- **What can I do with a degree in Philosophy?**
A major in Philosophy is excellent preparation for post-graduate work in any liberal arts discipline as well as for advanced study and careers in law, medicine, business, and other professional fields. The skills and capacities developed through the study of philosophy are applicable to virtually any career and can readily be integrated with the requirements for nearly any entry-level job. In the long term, philosophical training can be of great benefit for career advancement as well as for the enhancement of one's quality of life.
- **What special skills or abilities will I develop as a philosophy major in a liberal arts context?**
The study of philosophy serves to develop a wide range of skills and intellectual abilities including the ability to formulate and solve problems, to communicate effectively both in writing and in speech, to generate and organize ideas, to identify hidden assumptions and articulate alternative perspectives, to assess the pros and cons of competing positions, and to analyze and synthesize complex data. Perhaps the most important outcome of philosophical study is the enhanced capacity to engage in thinking that is at once disciplined, critical, and imaginatively creative--an ability needed for success in any complex intellectual or practical endeavor.

- **Is there a particular course that will best introduce me to the field of philosophy?**

One might begin in philosophy either with a general introduction (PHIL 111) or with an introduction to a subfield such as ethics (PHIL 112), logic (PHIL 113), or history of philosophy (PHIL 114). Students seeking a broad overview of the discipline may find Introduction to Philosophy the best place to start. However, many students find Introduction to Ethics or History of Ancient Philosophy to be the most stimulating first encounter with philosophy.

- **What is a philosophy course like?**

Philosophy courses differ greatly from one another, depending on the instructor, the topics, the level, and other factors. Typically, philosophy teachers encourage students to be critical, to develop their own ideas, and to appreciate both differences between things that appear alike and similarities between things that seem utterly different. Philosophy teachers emphasize not only what is said in the readings, but also why it is said; (whether or not the reasons given for believing it are good) and what students themselves think about the matter.

- **What minors or concentrations would enhance my education as a philosophy major?**

Students majoring in philosophy are encouraged to pursue a second major or a minor in any discipline of their interest. Among the most frequently selected fields are English, Political Science, History, Psychology, and Foreign Languages. Students intending to go to graduate school in philosophy are strongly encouraged to supplement the major with studies in a foreign language.

- **Is graduate study or further professional study necessary to find a job in this field?**

For a teaching position in philosophy at the college or university level, an advanced degree is essential. However, because the skills and abilities gained through the study of philosophy are applicable to virtually any vocation, a bachelor's degree in philosophy qualifies one for a wide range of entry-level positions in business, social work, government service, and education.

- **Where can I obtain additional information about career opportunities in philosophy?**

- The American Philosophical Association
Committee on Career Opportunities
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716
- RU Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
- RU Career Services Center
- RU McConnell Library
- RU Center for Counseling and Student Development
- RU Advising Centers

**For an application to Radford University
contact the RU Admissions Office**



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