

WHY STUDY PHILOSOPHY?

Ideally, studying philosophy will help you deepen your reflection on your own life — helping you come to a greater awareness of how you see the world and the structure of your own values. As a department, **we seek to cultivate our students' intellectual growth by fostering the interpretive, critical, analytic, and communicative skills necessary for personal, intellectual, and civic development.** We aspire to be a supportive community, which encourages students to integrate their learning; inside the classroom and in casual interactions in the lounge, we hope to help you draw connections among the diverse theories and traditions you are exposed to in all your courses and other experiences.

No brief explanation of philosophy can capture the richness and variety of philosophy. It is a pursuit of fundamental truths, a quest for understanding, and a study of the principles of conduct. It seeks to provide rational methods of resolving conflicts and solving problems. It teaches students how to evaluate ideas and arguments. To that end, the primary skills you'll develop in an undergraduate philosophy program include:

Problem Solving

Philosophy teaches students to analyze concepts, definitions, arguments, and problems. It contributes to the capacity to organize ideas and issues, deal with questions of value, and extract what is essential from masses of information.

Persuasion

Philosophy provides training in the construction of clear explanations, good arguments, and apt examples. One learns to build and defend one's own views, to appreciate competing positions, and to articulate convincingly why one's own views are preferable to alternatives.

Communication

Philosophy helps one to express what is distinctive in one's view. It enhances the ability to explain difficult material, and it helps one to eliminate ambiguities and vagueness from writing and speech.

Writing

Writing is taught extensively in philosophy courses, and many philosophical texts are unexcelled as literary essays. Originality is encouraged, and students are urged to use their creativity to develop their own ideas.

