Philosophy

Department Faculty
William Davis
John Wingard, Jr.

Department Goals
The study of philosophy at Covenant College is directed to helping students understand what philosophy is and how it has an inescapable relevance to their lives. The history of philosophy is an account of philosophers and thinkers making recommendations about how to conceive of or to interpret this or that element of human experience. One of the aims of philosophy is to examine these recommendations to see how they stand up under rigorous analysis. A further aim of philosophy is to bring together such interpretive ideas and concepts into a coherent framework or worldview. Distinctively Christian philosophy seeks to study the ideas and concepts that compose a given worldview from the standpoint of biblical presuppositions. The end of such activity is to assist students in developing a Christian worldview that enables them better to live in a way that pleases God and that consequently provides for a more meaningful life.

The study of philosophy provides an intellectual background in the history of human thought that equips students to have a better understanding of other academic disciplines. It also increases skill in the logical analysis of ideas.

Requirements for the Major in Philosophy

The core and distribution requirements for a major in philosophy are those listed for baccalaureate degrees on page 24, with the exception that a course in history or literature is required to fulfill the humanities distribution requirement. It is recommended that a philosophy major take PHI 102 Introduction to Logic/Critical Thinking as one of their earliest philosophy elective courses.

Core requirements ............................................................... 58
Electives .............................................................................. 30

Major and Supporting Course Requirements

PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy ...................................... 3
History of Philosophy (three of the following)
   PHI 201 Classical to Renaissance, or
   PHI 202 Modern to 19th Century, or
   PHI 253 Contemporary Analytic Philosophy, or
   PHI 254 20th-Century Continental Philosophy ............ 9
PHI 301 Moral Philosophy....................................................3

Philosophical electives * (see list below)............................ 6

Total hours for the major ................................................ 38
Total degree hours ..................................................... 126

Requirements for the Minor in Philosophy

PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy ..................................... 3
History of Philosophy:
   PHI 201 Classical to Renaissance, or
   PHI 202 Modern to 19th Century .................................. 3
   PHI 253 Contemporary Analytic Philosophy or
   PHI 254 20th-Century Continental Philosophy ............. 3

Philosophical elective * (see list below)............................... 3

Total hours for the minor ................................................ 18

Requirements for the Major in Philosophy and Religion

The core and distribution requirements for a major in Philosophy and Religion are those listed for baccalaureate degrees on page 24, with the exception that a course in history or literature is required to fulfill the humanities requirement.

It may seem that more philosophy than religion is required, but the major assumes that students will be taking the required Bible and doctrine courses as part of their core requirements which amount to 12 hours. Further, we have a Biblical Studies Department and not a religion department, and the courses required below are in keeping with the religion courses the department does offer.

Core requirements ......................................................... 58
Electives ........................................................................... 29-30

Major and Supporting Course Requirements

BIB 487 Modern Theology .................................................. 3
MIS 302 World Religions .................................................... 3
PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy “W” .......................... 3
History of Philosophy:
   PHI 201 Classical to Renaissance or
   PHI 202 Modern to 19th Century .................................. 3
   PHI 253 Contemporary Analytic Philosophy or
   PHI 254 20th Century Continental Philosophy ............. 3
PHI 301 Moral Philosophy .................................................. 3
PHI 304 Philosophy of Religion ........................................... 3
PHI 492 or BIB 492 Senior Integration Paper “S”…… 2 or 3
Philosophical elective * (see list below) .......................... 3
Philosophy electives: any philosophy courses ................... 6
Religion electives: philosophical electives that are
   BIB courses * (see list below) ................................... 6
Total hours for the major ......................................... 38-39
Total degree hours .................................................. 126

Requirements for the Minor in Philosophy and Religion
PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy.................................. 3
History of Philosophy (two of the following):
   PHI 201 Classical to Renaissance, or
   PHI 202 Modern to 19th Century................................. 3
   PHI 253 Contemporary Analytic Philosophy, or
   PHI 254 20th-Century Continental Philosophy............. 3
   Philosophical elective * (see list below) ......................... 3
   Philosophy elective: any philosophy course ..................... 3
   Religion elective: philosophical electives that are
   BIB course * (see list below) .................................... 3
Total hours for the minor ........................................... 18
* Philosophical electives: In addition to any PHI-prefixed
course, the following courses may be taken as philosophical
electives:
   BIB 302, 303, 372, 373, 376, 383, 386, 387, 388, 487;
   COS 425, ECO 430, EDU 370, ENG 380, HIS 305, 399;
   IDS 310, 335; MAT 290, 360, 410, 470; MIS 302,
   MUS 372, NSC 115; PHY 351, PSY 306, 360; SOC
   342, 402.

Requirements for Double Majors
Students double-majoring in Philosophy or Philosophy &
Religion and another discipline MAY:

1. Count up to six (6) hours of philosophical electives in the
   other major discipline also as Philosophy electives in
   addition to the six hours of philosophical electives already
   required for the Philosophy or Philosophy & Religion
   major. (Philosophical electives with prefixes other than
   “PHI” are “philosophically rich” courses in that they
devote significant attention to the metaphysical,
epistemological and/or ethical foundations of another
discipline. For the list of approved philosophical electives,
please see above.)
2. Satisfy the Philosophy SIP requirement by completing the
   SIP requirements of the other major AND including a
   member of the Philosophy Department faculty in the
   process of formulating the thesis, bibliography and outline
   of the SIP for the other major.

Philosophy Courses (PHI)

101 Introduction to Philosophy
An introduction to philosophical thinking, what it is, and
what it has to do with human life. The course will emphasize
the role of a conceptual framework or world and life view in
one’s knowledge about the world and the problems involved
in attempting to validate such frameworks or worldviews.
There will be a consideration of the traditional areas of
philosophical concern such as the nature of reality,
knowledge, and moral and aesthetic values. A major focus of
the course will be to consider all these issues from a
distinctively Christian perspective. Three units. “W” HUM

102 Introduction to Logic/Critical Thinking
A study of the evaluation of arguments and what it means to
think critically. A major focus will be on informal fallacies
in arguments although some formal logic will be considered.
The course will also emphasize the role of language in
argument and how what one considers to be logical
presupposes a certain view of the nature of reality. Three
hours. HUM

171 Bioethics
An application of moral theory to decision-making regarding
health care. The course will focus on developing the ability
to exercise discernment when dealing with complex choices
and the capacity to communicate moral insights in a way
likely to help others. Influential recent works on medical-
ethical issues will be discussed, and students will regularly
practice making decisions as part of an Ethics Committee.
Open to Pre-med majors without prerequisite; prior
completion of PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy, is
strongly recommended for all other students. Three hours.
“W”

201 History of Philosophy I: Classical to Renaissance
A survey of western philosophy from the pre-Socratics
through Renaissance humanism. Major figures such as Plato,
Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas will be emphasized.
Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor.
Three hours. “W”

202 History of Philosophy II: Modern to 19th Century
A survey of western philosophy from Descartes to James.
Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor.
Three hours. “W”

253 History of Philosophy III: Contemporary Analytic
   Philosophy
An examination of key figures in 20th century western philosophy. Russell, Wittenstein, Moore, Austin, Whitehead, Quine and Sartre will be examined. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

254 20th-Century Continental Philosophy
The study of Western European 20th-century philosophy (mainly Germany and France). The course will focus upon three sections: 1) Phenomenology to Philosophical Hermeneutics, 2) Marxism to Critical Theory and 3) Structuralism to Deconstruction. In each section, the student will read primary texts which will engage philosophical problems addressed by the philosopher’s own interests, and yet, placing those problems in the history of philosophy. Three hours.

265 Existentialism
Perhaps Sartre's statement that "existence precedes essence" provides the most succinct summary of the project of existentialism. Themes such as "despair," "meaninglessness," "alienation," "the absurd" and "the authentic/inauthentic life" are "major players" in existential thought. In this course, we will do a close reading of some of the most significant texts in the existential tradition (mostly those of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre) and seek to develop an appropriate biblical response. Prerequisites: PHI 101 prerequisite and at least one course. PHI 200-249 recommended (but not required with permission of the instructor). Three hours.

272 Social Ethics
Assuming something of the background of Ethics 203, this course will examine the ethical implications of the Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:28. The course will present a biblical-theological basis for culture and cultural expressions. The course will examine the moral consequences of this basis in such areas of Christian concerns as politics, economics, art, education, the environment, medical issues and other relevant current trends in terms of Christian moral responsibility. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

281 Philosophy of Art
The clarification of terms and a discussion of proposed criteria for aesthetic judgments. Major works will be read and discussed. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

283 Philosophy of Science
A study of the nature, scope and limitations of scientific method and explanation with some attention being given to scientific concepts such as causality, space, and time. Some inquiry will be made into the relationship between science and human values. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

299 / 399 Special Topics
This course offers opportunities for study in various topics of interest within the field of philosophy. These may be short-term courses offered during the semester or during the summer term. Topics will be decided upon by the philosophy faculty as need and interest arise. Credit to be determined.

301 Moral Philosophy
An examination of classical and contemporary theories in moral philosophy. Attention will be given both to metaethical issues (such as the question of whether there is an objective moral order and the question of the relation of God to ethics) and to historically important normative ethical theories (such as Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, and virtue theory). The course will also focus on the distinctives of Christian ethics from a philosophical perspective. Finally, some consideration will be given to application of moral norms in the context of one or two moral issues of contemporary importance. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

302 Metaphysics
An examination of the classical metaphysical problems such as the nature of reality, minds and bodies, personal identity, free will and determinism, causality, time and the nature of God. Attention will be given to the question of whether or not there is metaphysical knowledge. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours. “W”

303 Epistemology
An examination of major schools of epistemological theory. Current views of the justification of knowledge claims will be emphasized. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours. “W”

304 Philosophy of Religion.
A survey of the traditional issues basic to a philosophical analysis of religion, for example, the concept of God, grounds for theistic belief, the matter of religious knowledge, the problem of evil and problems of religious language. A distinctively Christian approach to these issues will be a major emphasis of the course. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

316 Apologetics
A survey of various systems of Christian apologetics including the study of anti-theistic theories. Prerequisites: BIB 277 and 278. Three hours.

355 Christian Philosophers
This course will focus on at least one distinctively Christian thinker who is a philosopher or whose thought has significant philosophical implications. Representative works of the thinker will be read along with critical assessments. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

**356 Philosophy of Language**
A systematic and detailed study of the question: “How does a word ‘mean’?” Various theories of meaning will be examined. A major focus will be on the relationship of one’s metaphysics or view of reality to one’s theory of meaning. Hermeneutics, or what it means to interpret the Bible or a work of literature, will also be a significant emphasis of the course. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

**357 Formal Logic**
The propositional calculus and general quantification theory with some attention to practical application of these principles. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

**358 Philosophy of Mind**
An in-depth examination of the traditional mind-body problem. Current theories regarding the nature of mind will be studied. There will be a special focus of what it means to consider this topic from the standpoint of a Christian metaphysics. Also, some attention will be given to cognitive science and the matter of computers and human thought. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

**380 Figure Seminar**
A consideration of the principal works and contributions of a single influential figure from the history of philosophy. Particular attention will be given to reading primary texts by the figure and investigating the historical context in which the figure worked. Three semester credits. Prerequisites: PHI 101, and at least one of PHI 201, 202, 253 or 254. At least one of PHI 301, 302, or 303 is recommended. Three hours.

**405 Seminar in Philosophy**
Philosophy seminars take up special topics and issues in philosophy as well as in-depth studies of prominent and influential philosophers. Prerequisite: PHI 101 or permission from the instructor. Three hours.

**411 Philosophy Internship**
Off-campus work that utilizes skills developed by the academic study of Philosophy (conceptual clarification, assumption exposition, argument analysis, etc.) and is overseen by a business, ministry or endeavor maintaining a relationship with Covenant's Philosophy program. Prerequisites: PHI 101, at least one of PHI 201, 202, 253 or 254; and at least one of PHI 301, 302, or 303. One hour per 40 hours of work, up to three hours. “W”

**492 Senior Integration Paper Seminar**
Twice-weekly meetings to discuss the integration of philosophical work and Christian faith, strategies for pursuing the Philosophy Senior Integration Project, and conversations about ongoing work on each student's SIP. Prerequisites: PHI 101, at least one of PHI 201, 202, 253 or 254, and at least one of PHI 301, 302, or 303. Senior standing. Two hours. “S”