

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”  
– Socrates, 470-399 B.C.E., *Apology*

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## A Major Matter: Minoring in Philosophy

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[http://www.selu.edu/acad\\_research/depts/hist\\_ps/index.html](http://www.selu.edu/acad_research/depts/hist_ps/index.html)

Southeastern Louisiana University



## What Is Philosophy?

Every action begins with an idea. Since an idea may be either good or bad, the action that an idea produces may itself be either good or bad. Learning to tell the difference between a good idea and a bad, maybe even terribly destructive, idea is part of what philosophy is about.

Philosophy is the search for fundamental truths about human society and the natural world, the quest for the principles of morally right conduct, and the study of the rules of effective, truthful thinking. Philosophical studies are undertaken by relying on only two authoritative sources of knowledge: human reason and experience. Philosophers seek to establish standards of evidence, to provide rational methods of resolving conflicts, and to create techniques for evaluating ideas and arguments. Philosophy helps students develop the capacity to see the world from the perspectives of other people whose ideas are often very different from their own.

### Major Branches of Philosophy

- **Logic** – the study of sound methods of constructing arguments in order to defend points of view and to distinguish good reasoning from bad reasoning.
- **Ethics** – the search for the meanings of moral concepts and for principles to guide moral decisions and conduct in both public and private life.
- **Metaphysics** – the search for basic criteria for determining what exists and to understand the whole of what there is.
- **Epistemology** – the study of the nature and of knowledge, i.e., what knowledge is and how we obtain it.

### Special Fields of Philosophy

- Philosophy of Art (Aesthetics)
- Philosophy of Mind
- Philosophy of Science
- Philosophy of History
- Philosophy of Religion
- Political Philosophy

### Valuable Life Skills from Studying Philosophy

- Better Reading and Writing Skills
- Better Problem-solving Skills
- Better Communication Skills
- Better Critical Thinking Skills

### Valuable Academic Skills from Studying Philosophy

- Better understanding of ideas in other subjects
- Better understanding of connections between subjects
- Better research and analysis skills

Socrates  
 Plato  
 Aristotle  
 Augustine  
 Thomas Aquinas  
 Machiavelli  
 Hobbes  
 Descartes  
 Spinoza  
 Leibniz  
 Locke  
 Berkeley  
 Hume  
 Smith  
 Kant  
 Hegel  
 Schopenhauer  
 Bentham  
 Mill  
 Darwin  
 Nietzsche  
 Marx  
 Peirce  
 James  
 Dewey  
 Hook  
 Santayana  
 Whitehead  
 Ayer  
 Carnap  
 Russell  
 Wittgenstein  
 Ryle  
 Maritain  
 Gilson  
 Merleau-Ponty  
 Kierkegaard  
 Heidegger  
 Sartre  
 Camus  
 Quine  
 Berlin  
 Derrida  
 Deleuze  
 Dennett  
 Popper  
 Rawls  
 Rorty  
 Skinner  
 Gettier



“Philosophy is at once the most sublime and the most trivial of human pursuits. It works in the minutest crannies and it opens out the widest vistas. It ‘bakes no bread,’ as has been said, but it can inspire our souls with courage; and repugnant as its manners, its doubting and challenging, its quibbling and dialectics, often are to common people, no one of us can get along without the far-flashing beams of light it sends over the world’s perspectives.” – William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, 1907

#### Careers Enhanced by the Study of Philosophy

- Law
- Teaching
- Criminal Justice
- Medicine
- Any career requiring clear thinking, good writing, and problem-solving ability
- Science
- Computer Science
- Business
- Public Service

#### Preparation for Philosophy Minor

Good reading comprehension  
 Good writing skills  
 Curiosity about ideas  
 Self-discipline  
 Emotional and intellectual maturity

#### Requirements for Philosophy Minor

18 semester hours:  
 12 hours @ 300 level  
 6 hours @ 400 level

#### When to Begin Your Philosophy Minor

After completion of English 102 or 122H  
 First semester of sophomore year

## PHILOSOPHY COURSES

### DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY & POLITICAL SCIENCE

**Philosophy 201. Introduction to Logical Reasoning.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisites:** English 102 and Math 105 or higher. Introduction to basic principles of deductive and inductive reasoning, emphasizing practical application. May substituted for second required mathematics course with permission of student's department.

**Philosophy 301. Introduction to Philosophy.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** English 102 or 122H. Introductory study of philosophy considering the basic areas—metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and logic.

**Philosophy 302. The Great Philosophers.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** English 102 or 122H. Introductory readings of great philosophers from ancient Greeks to moderns.

**Philosophy 310. Critical Thinking.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** English 102 or 122H. Methods of understanding, analyzing, and evaluating arguments, Designed to improve analytical and critical skills in thinking, reading, writing, and listening.

**Philosophy 313. Ethics.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** English 102 or 122H. Major systems of thought concerning moral values, good and evil, right and wrong.

**Philosophy 314. Special Topics.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** English 102 or 122H. Courses not included in the catalog, e.g., philosophy of science and philosophy of religion, etc.

**Philosophy 315. Philosophy of History.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** English 102 or 122H. Study of the way major philosophers have understood history, usually in terms of searching for patterns and meanings in history.

**Philosophy 320. Philosophy and the Arts (Aesthetics).** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** English 102 or 122H. Readings concerned with question of beauty, or what makes something a work of art in film, literature, music, and painting.

**Philosophy 321. Existentialism and Contemporary Philosophy.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** English 102 or 122H. Major figures in existentialism and other important figures in contemporary philosophy.

**Philosophy 416/516. American Philosophy.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** Junior standing or consent of the Dept. Head. Major developments in American philosophy through detailed consideration of American thinkers.

**Philosophy 417/517. Intellectual History (History of Ideas).** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** Junior standing or consent of Dept. Head. Influences on western thought from Middle Ages to twentieth century.

**Philosophy 418/518. Independent Study in the History of Philosophy.** 3 hrs. **Prerequisite:** Junior standing, permission of the Dept. Head, and at least nine hours of undergraduate philosophy. Conducted as a tutorial for individual students seeking work above the introductory level.

### PHILOSOPHY FACULTY

**Jeffrey Bell, Ph.D. Tulane University**  
jbell@selu.edu

**Teaching Areas** — Introduction to Philosophy • Ethics • Philosophy of History  
Intellectual History • Philosophy & the Arts • Existentialism & Contemporary Philosophy • Independent Study in the History of Philosophy • Special Topics • Political Theory

**Scholarship** — Scottish Enlightenment, Gilles Deleuze  
**Selected Publications** — *Deleuze's Hume: Philosophy, Culture and the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh University Press 2009) • *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos: Gilles Deleuze and the Philosophy of Difference* (University of Toronto Press 2006)

**Awards** — Visiting Research Fellowship, Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, Edinburgh • C. Howard Nichols Professorship in History & Govt. 2002-2005 • SLU President's Award for Excellence in Research 2010

**Peter Gratton, Ph.D., DePaul University**  
peter.gratton@selu.edu

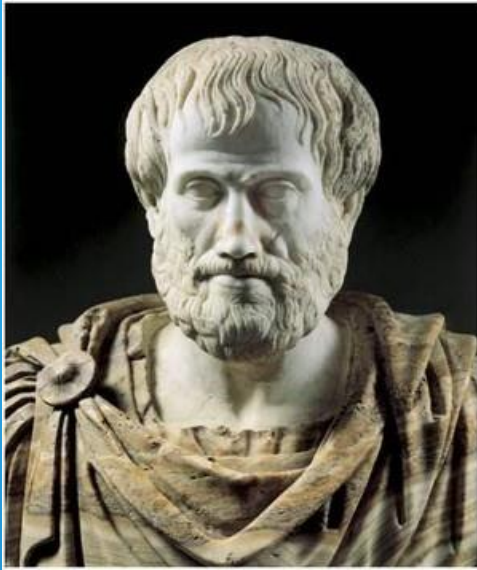
**Teaching Areas** — Introduction to Philosophy • Introduction to Logical Reasoning • Great Thinkers • Ethics • Intellectual History  
**Scholarship** — Contemporary European Philosophy • History of Philosophy • African Philosophy • Ethics and Political Philosophy

**Selected Publications** — *Achille Mbembe* (Polity Press, 2021), *Speculative Realism: Problems and Prospects* (Bloomsbury, 2014), *The State of Sovereignty: Lessons from the Political Fictions of Modernity* (SUNY Press, 2012)

**Awards** — Research Fellowship, Durham University • Research Fellowship, The Humanities Centre at Australia National University



# Philosophy



“All men by nature desire to know.”  
– Aristotle, 384-322 B.C.E, *Metaphysics*

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