

PHILOSOPHY

Academic Year

2014-2015

School

School of Humanities and Social Science [School Web site](#)

School Dean

Janet Dizinno, Ph.D. hssdean@stmarytx.edu

Department

Philosophy

Department Chair

Megan Mustain, Ph.D. mmustain@stmarytx.edu

Description of Program/Major

MISSION STATEMENT

The St. Mary's University Department of Philosophy teaches and guides students in philosophical inquiry, helping them to integrate the study of philosophy as an academic discipline with the practice of philosophy as a way of life. To acquaint students with philosophy as an academic discipline, we begin their education in the twenty-five-century-long philosophical conversation about ultimate ideas and values; help them develop facility with philosophic methods of inquiry; and ready them for possible graduate studies in philosophy, law, and a wide range of academic and professional programs for which philosophy provides an excellent preparation. To introduce students to philosophy as a way of life, we help them engage in critical self-understanding and self-appropriation, while encouraging responsible participation in the various communities that form their social environment: the university, society, the world, and the community of faith. As integral to our mission, we as faculty attempt to embody the meaning of philosophy through our pursuit of critical inquiry in the classroom, and in our professional and social lives. Through teaching courses in the Core Curriculum, we also bring philosophical inquiry as a way of life to all students at St. Mary's University. Philosophy, so conceived, taught, practiced, and lived, belongs alongside theology at the authentic core of a Marianist education.

THE PROGRAMS

The philosophy department invites students who are majoring in any other area to consider a second major in philosophy. A major in philosophy can deepen a student's appreciation of any subject and will prepare the student for graduate work in either field. Furthermore, while many students who major only in philosophy will go on to graduate school in philosophy, the department nevertheless encourages its majors to pursue a second major or a minor in a different field. Even those students who plan to apply to philosophy graduate school would benefit from exposure to other disciplines which could provide grist for reflection, analysis, and an exploration of conceptual foundations. It is not uncommon for students to pursue graduate studies in philosophy "of something," such as philosophy of science, philosophy of art, philosophy of mathematics, political philosophy, and so forth.

Degree Plans

For sample degree plans, see this URL: http://www.stmarytx.edu/registrar/?go=deg_plans

MAJOR PROGRAM (30 hours): (1) Seven required courses: PL 2310, PL 3360, PL 3361, PL 3362, PL 3363, PL 3364, and 4395; (2) Three upper-division (33XX or 43XX) PL electives.

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MINOR PROGRAM (18 hours): (1) One required course: PL 2310; (2) Three historical courses from among the following: PL 3360, PL 3361, PL 3362, PL 3363, PL 3364; (3) Two upper-division (33XX or 43XX) PL electives, which may be either historical or topical.

St. Mary's Core

SMC 1311 Foundations of Reflection: Self

This course explores foundational questions about human existence and a human being's relationship to reality. It starts with a focus on a person's natural inclination to wonder, and on how inquiry moves persons to find intelligible meaning in experiences. It proceeds by examining the basic structure of conscious activity, which allows students to discover what they are doing when they are experiencing, understanding, knowing, and deciding. The goal of this analysis is the student's critical self-appropriation of their own natures as knowers and doers. The course introduces the student to the origins of such systematic and critical self-appropriation in ancient Greece, in the philosophical activities of Socrates and Plato. It explores how the most basic and overarching questions about human existence that were asked by the first philosophers are still those that must be asked if people are to penetrate below the facts of everyday life to think deeply about what is real, true, valuable, just, and meaningful in human life. They include such questions as: Who am I? What is real? Can I know what is truly worthwhile? Does God exist? Does history have a meaning? What is justice? Thus the course examines how critical self-reflection illuminates human and humane living in a way crucial to personal development.

SMC 2301 Foundations of Practice: Ethics

This course develops a unified set of concepts and skills that form the foundation of objective moral reasoning. Included among those concepts are freedom, responsibility, the particular good, the common good, and the transcendent good. It elucidates those moral structures and precepts that are not only implicit in the nature of consciousness but also necessary for the flourishing of civilization. Thus, it builds upon the central ideas from SMC 1311 and SMC 1301. Prerequisites: SMC 1301, 1311, 1312, 1313, and 1314.

SMC 2301 EG Foundations of Practice: Ethics

Same as SMC 2301. For engineering students only. Must also include a one-hour lab for guided discussions of cases in engineering ethics.

Degree Requirements

Core Curriculum (SMC)

St. Mary's University Core (30 Hours)

All St. Mary's Core SMC13## "Reflection" courses must be completed before registering for SMC23## "Practice" courses. "Reflection" courses can be taken in any order followed by "Practice" courses in any order.

SMC 1301	Foundations of Civilization	3
SMC 1311	Foundations of Reflection: Self	3
SMC 1312	Foundations of Reflection: Nature	3
SMC 1313	Foundations of Reflection: Others	3
SMC 1314	Foundations of Reflection: God	3
SMC 2301	Foundations of Practice: Ethics	3
SMC 2302	Foundations of Practice: Civic Engagement and Social Action	3

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SMC 2303	Foundations of Practice: Fine Arts and Creative Process	3
SMC 2304	Foundations of Practice: Literature	3
SMC 4301	Capstone Seminar: Prospects for Community and Civilization	3

School Specific Core (SSC)

School of Humanities and Social Sciences School Specific Core (30 Hours)

Speech	SE 1321 (for international students), SE 1341, SE 2333, SE 3391	3
Composition and Rhetoric (grade of "C" or better)	EN 1311, EN 1313 (for international students)	3
Mathematics	MT 1301, MT 1302, MT 1303, MT 1305, MT 1306, MT 1411, MT 2412	3
Foreign Languages	Six hours at the sophomore level (2311, 2312) in a Foreign Language previously studied for a minimum of one year; Or, 6 hours of introductory level (1311, 1312) in a Foreign Language not previously studied; Or, 12 hours of CLEP credit for a language previously studied.	6
History	Any HS courses.	3
Science	BL 1301, BL 1302, BL 3311, BL 3312, CH 1303, CH 1304, CH 1401, CH 1402, EG 2300, ES 1300, ES 1303, ES 1304, ES 1373, PY 1300, PY 1310, PY 1401, PY 1402	3
Theology	Advanced Theology 33XX, HU 3303	3
Fine Arts	AR, DM, MU	3
Literature	EN 23XX	3

Four Year Degree Plan

[Sample Degree Plan](#)

Department Courses and Descriptions

PL 2310

Symbolic Logic (3)

This course is required of all philosophy majors and minors. It introduces the student to modern symbolic logic, and generally includes truth tables, the propositional calculus, and the predicate calculus, as well as translating between natural language and logic. It is a prerequisite for all advanced logic courses, and covers some topics tested by the LSAT.

PL 3314

Applied Ethics (3)

This course covers recent philosophical discussions within one or more broad areas of ethics. Possible topics include but are not limited to medical ethics, business ethics, professional ethics, research ethics, environmental ethics, international issues, media ethics, computer ethics, educational ethics, and human and animal rights. Emphasis will be on the application of theories to cases. Prerequisite is any one of the following: SMC 2301, PL 2332, or PL 2336.

PL 3320

Environmental Philosophy (3)

This course examines the relationship between human beings and the rest of the natural world. It explores the implications of affirming and of denying that relationship. Possible implications include but are not limited to the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, moral, professional, and spiritual development of the person, as well as the progress of society and culture.

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PL 3322

Philosophy of Human Nature (3)

This course focuses on questions in philosophical anthropology. Authors from different historical periods are studied. Interpersonal, moral, and social issues take precedence. Emphasis falls on the tension between theories of self-interest and psychological egoism on the one hand, and theories espousing the natural social orientation of human existence on the other. Other topics include friendship, love, and the meaning of self-sacrifice, as well as methods of discerning authenticity and inauthenticity in human relationships. .

PL 3332

Social & Political Philosophy (3)

This course examines some of the main problems of social and political philosophy through an analysis, comparison, and critical examination of various views concerning the natures of individuality and society and the relations between them. It will include study of some of the main works by several major philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Marx, Rawls, and Voegelin.

PL 3336

Feminist Philosophy (3)

The course explores the philosophical contributions of feminism through careful study and evaluation of both traditional and feminist insights into philosophical questions. Areas of inquiry include the metaphysical, epistemological, moral, and political aspects of philosophical approaches to sex and gender.

PL 3344

Philosophy of Religion (3)

Introduction to a critical study of religions; appropriate methods for the study of religious phenomena; variety of manifestations of the sacred in religions, ancient and modern; religious language; ritual; religious communities; the problem of evil; the relation of religion and morality; the question of salvation.

PL 3358

Eastern Philosophy (3)

An introduction to Eastern/Asian philosophy. Topics vary from a study of orthodox Indian thought and its development, classical Chinese thought and its development, and Buddhist philosophy. Specific themes may include the nature of existence, the nature of human being, enlightenment, the individual and society, stages of human development, yoga, nature, and the sage.

PL 3360

Ancient Philosophy (3)

This course covers the writings and the cultural and historical context of various Western philosophers who lived before 300 C.E. The selection of figures and texts explored will vary from one semester to the next, but Plato and Aristotle will always be covered. Other possible figures could include the Pre-Socratics, the Stoics, the Cynics, and the Epicureans.

PL 3361

Medieval Philosophy (3)

This course covers the writings of various Mediterranean philosophers from the time of early Christianity (300 C.E.) through late scholasticism (1500 C.E.). The figures and texts will vary from one semester to another, Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas will always be covered. Other possible subjects include but are not limited to Boethius, St. Anselm, Peter Abelard, Hildegard von Bingen, William of Occam, Duns Scotus, Francis Suarez, as well as Jewish and Arabic philosophers from the period.

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PL 3362

Early Modern Philosophy (3)

This course introduces students to early Modern (17th and 18th century) philosophy as it arose out of Renaissance Humanism and early Modern Science and developed in the Continental Rationalism of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz and the British Empiricism of Hobbes, Locke, and Hume. Emphasis will be placed on the characteristic problems, questions, and methods of the period and on the continuity of concerns, problems and unresolved issues.

PL 3363

Late Modern Philosophy (3)

This course examines the development of philosophical inquiry in late modernity from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. It emphasizes an historical understanding of the philosophical questions of this era and a critical appraisal of the responses offered by late modern thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Mill, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard.

PL 3364

Contemporary Philosophy (3)

This course explores the multifaceted development of philosophical thought in the contemporary world. It does so through an examination of representative philosophers and philosophical movements from the mid-20th century to the present day, particularly those arising in Western Europe. The course emphasizes historical and critical understanding of the philosophical questions and modes of thinking that emerge in the contemporary philosophical conversation. Areas of study may include, but are not limited to: existentialism, phenomenology, critical theory, post-structuralism, feminism, pragmatism, and Anglo-analytic philosophy.

PL 3366

American Philosophy (3)

The course traces the development of philosophy in the United States with an eye to uncovering the philosophical underpinnings of contemporary American culture. Through the use of primary texts, the course will investigate the major questions and approaches that emerged in the United States and explore the uniquely American ways of reckoning with the perennial philosophical questions.

PL 3368

Philosophy in Latin America (3)

This course introduces students to philosophical reflection in the Latin American tradition, touching on the Pre-Columbian, colonial, 19th, and 20th century periods. Some relevant European authors are also studied. Topics range widely. However, all topics are studied within their Latin American historical and social context. Questions about culture and cultural identity surface. The course explores the conditions of the possibility of sustaining cultural identity and to what extent philosophical reflection can contribute to this. Students gain a better understanding of both the unique history of Latin America and of the universal philosophical questions that the Latin American experience brings to life.

PL 3370

Special Topics (3)

These courses each consist of an advanced study of some philosophical topic not covered in other courses in the catalog. The specific subject is indicated whenever the course is offered.

PL 3372

Philosophy of Film (3)

This course covers various philosophical questions in film theory. Possible topics include the nature of film, film aesthetics, the language of film, the psychology of film, biases in films (gender, economic, racial, and so forth), and the ethics of

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ensorship. A basic familiarity on the part of the student with the history of film from early silent films through CGI is presumed. Viewing of certain films may be assigned as homework.

PL 3375

Advanced Logic (3)

This course covers standard topics in metalogic, including syntax, semantics, proof theory, completeness, decidability, consistency, and the Skolem-Lowenheim theorem. Prerequisite: PL 2310 Symbolic Logic.

PL 3378

Philosophy of Literature (3)

This course examines the literary expression of philosophical concerns, such as authenticity, freedom and choice, good vs. evil, and justice vs. injustice. This typically involves the study of one or two philosophical works that investigate a philosophical issue (e.g., the ideal society; the tragic hero) to supplement the focus on various novels, plays, or poems exploring the issue in literature. Texts may include literary criticism, used to assist in explicating the themes and concepts involved in the philosophical issue under consideration. The course usually includes multicultural expressions and concerns.

PL 3380

Directed Study (3)

Directed studies are an opportunity for students to pursue critical inquiries of their own choosing in consultation with a member of the department who knows the subject area and is sympathetic to working with the project. A Directed Study program must be arranged according to University policy and include permission of the chair and major adviser.

PL 4310

Philosophy of Law (3)

Examination of various foundations of human legal order concentrating on a search for what can unite a people effectively under a rule of law; perspectives of natural law and legal positivism; the relation between law and justice; legal and moral obligations; the power of law to bind effectively and the use of sanctions; and problems arising from various theories of law.

PL 4312

Epistemology (3)

This course considers the cognitive relationship between humans and the world, knowers, knowledge, and the known. It will examine a variety of problems and theories concerning human knowing, including, for example: innate ideas, rationalism, empiricism, constructivism, the pragmatic notion of truth, and the problem of intentionality.

PL 4318

Professional Ethics (3)

This course explores the ethical obligations of professionals, how these obligations arise, and how (or whether) they differ significantly from the ethical obligations of non-professionals. Possible topics include but are not limited to medicine, law, engineering, journalism, business, teaching, and politics.

PL 4322

Philosophy of Economics (3)

A critical study of the meaning of economy and economic relations within social living. Themes covered include the meaning of economy, work, labor, human vocation, justice, and poverty. This course begins with a survey of views of what constitutes an economy and the meaning of just economic relations. It includes a study of contemporary theories of justice, including Catholic Social Teaching, with specific application to selected issues of economic justice.

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PL 4324

Philosophy of Science (3)

This course investigates the basic concepts and methods of the natural, social, and formal sciences. Possible topics include but are not limited to quantification, pseudoscience, realism versus anti-realism, probabilistic versus classical science, the ethics of research and technology, determinism versus freedom, and scientific revolutions. Prerequisite: SMC 1312.

PL 4334

Philosophy of Culture (3)

This course explores the most serious challenges facing the individual and societies in the 21st century: the presence and force of culture and its historical relationship to religion, civilization, and social order. It employs and relates perspectives from critical realist philosophy, world history, and culture studies.

PL 4340

Philosophy of Art & Aesthetics (3)

A critical examination of art as a realm of meaning. Aesthetics is a critically important part of every human life and culture. As a unique realm of The Beautiful, as encountered in music, dance, literature, architecture, fashion landscape architecture, all the fine and performing as well as culinary and practical arts both transmit and inculcate cultural, social and moral values as well as fulfilling natural human desires for sensually intellectual enrichment.

PL 4342

Metaphysics (3)

Metaphysics examines the most fundamental questions, inquiring into the origins or first principles of the ground of existence. The course will confront the need or impulse for metaphysical contemplation, the fundamental insights and structures of metaphysics, and the question of the legitimacy of metaphysics.

PL 4350

Philosophy of History (3)

This course inquires into history, i.e., that which is written and that which is written about. It surveys the efforts to make the course of human history intelligible. Emphasis is placed on the 19th and 20th century questions concerning the conditions for the possibility of historical knowledge and truth.

PL 4395

Senior Seminar (3)

A capstone seminar for philosophy majors. This course focuses on developing a student's consciousness of the understandings and skills acquired through careful study of the history, methods, and specializations of philosophy. Presentations will be made by members of the department on a variety of current topics and issues in philosophy. Emphasis will be placed on the student integrating the various areas of study and the variety of contemporary schools of philosophical activity. Each student will be required to complete a major paper in an area of the student's interest. (Prerequisite: philosophy major or permission of the chair).

Department Faculty

[Philosophy Faculty Website](#)

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