

Philosophy Program Writing Plan

Q: What does philosophy value in written communication?

A: As a discipline philosophy values: clear and direct prose; precision of expression; use of clear and cogent argumentative reasoning; careful exegetical interpretation of philosophical texts; proper use and documentation of textual evidence.

Q: What kind of texts do scholars and practitioners in philosophy create?

A: They produce books, journal articles, and papers for public presentation in which clarity of expression, the defining of key terms and concepts, the clear expression of thesis, well-reasoned argumentation for thesis, and mastery of the relevant literature are expected.

Q: What kinds of skills and experiences help students to learn to write in these ways?

A: Students learn to write in these ways by: 1) reading and analyzing classic and contemporary philosophical works that provide examples of clear argumentative or interpretive prose; 2) observing and practicing precision of expression and cogent argumentative reasoning in the classroom setting; 3) writing argumentative and interpretive philosophical essays; 4) revising and/or writing multiple examples of such essays

Q: What courses and kinds of assignments are best suited to giving students access to and practice in these skills and experiences?

A: Virtually *any* course offered in the philosophy program is well-suited to giving students access to and practice in these skills and experiences, because in every course we teach emphasis is placed on points (1) - (4) noted in the answer to the third question. Assignments include short writing assignments where students practice reading, interpreting, and clearly writing about an author's theory or argument, mid-length paper assignments where students practice critically evaluating a theory or argument in greater detail, and long paper assignments where students demonstrate their mastery of readings from the class and outside scholarly sources that are relevant to their papers, as well as defend an original thesis and argument.

Q: Which philosophy courses count for Writing Emphasis credit?

A: Except for PHL-115 Logic, every course offered in the philosophy program counts as Writing Emphasis. Writing is integral to the discipline. Thus, every course we teach emphasizes the development of writing skills. The lone exception to this is PHL-115. This course, while helpful in making one a better writer by making one better at reasoning and argumentation, has a strong formal, quasi-mathematical component which makes it not fit so well with the requirements of a Writing Emphasis course.

Writing Emphasis Courses in Philosophy

PHL-105 Introduction to Philosophy: Minds, Knowledge, and Value

PHL-105 Introduction to Philosophy: God, Self, and Free Will

PHL-105 Introduction to Philosophy: Masterworks

PHL-105 Introduction to Philosophy: Science Fiction and Philosophy

PHL-128 Morality and Moral Controversies

PHL-138 Freedom, State, and Society

PHL-165 Bio-medical Ethics

PHL-205 Environmental Ethics

PHL-206 Buddhist Thought

PHL-210 Topics in Philosophy

PHL-220 Ancient Greek Philosophy

PHL-230 Medieval Philosophy

PHL-235 Philosophy of Science

PHL-240 Early Modern Philosophy

PHL-245 Minds, Brains and Robots

PHL-255 Existentialism

PHL-265 Political Philosophy

PHL-270 Ethical Theory

PHL-277 Philosophy of Gender and Race

PHL-285 Law, Morality, and Punishment

PHL-305 Contemporary Continental Philosophy

PHL-315 Advanced Topics in Philosophy

PHL-320 Seminar in Ethics

PHL-335 Late Modern Philosophy

PHL-345 Philosophy of Language

PHL-355 Seminar in Metaphysics

PHL-365 Philosophy of Art and Aesthetic Experience

PHL-394 Directed Readings in Philosophy

PHL-444 Independent Study in Philosophy
PHL-464 Seminar in Philosophy of Religion
PHL-490 Philosophy in Colloquium
PHL-494 Internship in Philosophy