



The Passion

Why? With this little word, human beings first enter the world of philosophy—the passionate quest for understanding that has been at the heart of humanistic education since the time of Plato, a part of Catholic education since the time of Augustine, and an aspect of Jesuit education since the time of Ignatius of Loyola. Indeed, Aloysius Gonzaga himself was a philosophy student in a Jesuit university at the time of his death.

“Philosophia” is a Greek word meaning “love of wisdom.” Such a love pursues, with great zeal, the fundamental and the transcendent questions of human existence. Philosophy seeks, ultimately, to unify human understanding in a universal or integrative vision of all reality.

The Program

At Gonzaga, undergraduate students are invited to enter the philosophic quest through four programs of study: the Core program, Minor program, Major program, and Kossel Track program. Gonzaga philosophy courses also serve as components of interdisciplinary concentrations in Catholic studies, environmental studies and women’s studies. Gonzaga philosophy courses are also offered in the Gonzaga-in-Florence study abroad program, and internships in health care ethics are available to advanced students. With more than 20 full-time members and many part-time members, the philosophy faculty at Gonzaga University is among the largest in the western United States.

The Core

Because the sustained study of philosophy is at the very heart of any education that is Catholic, Jesuit, and humanistic, all Gonzaga University students complete this four-course philosophy sequence.

Critical Thinking: As the philosophical component of the Gonzaga Thought and Expression Block, this course is an introduction to the basic tools and skills of thinking and reasoning.

Philosophy of Human Nature: This course initiates students into the study of the human condition, the meaning and value of human life, and the human relationship to ultimate reality.

Ethics: An upper-division course that studies the goals of human life and the norms of moral behavior. It also seeks to apply those goals and norms to specific moral problems.

Advanced Study in Philosophy: All Gonzaga

students must complete at least one course of their choosing at the 400-level. Examples of advanced courses include Business Ethics, Existentialism, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of C.S. Lewis, and Chinese Philosophy.

The Minor

The Philosophy minor program offers students the opportunity to deepen their philosophical interests after completing the Core Curriculum requirements. The minor program features flexibility, since students are permitted to choose any three advanced (400-level) courses. The total number of credits needed for the Philosophy minor is 20, of which 11 are satisfied through the completion of the Core program. The Philosophy department offers a large number of advanced (400-level) courses from which students may choose. These include courses on philosophical issues that arise within a particular profession, as well as courses devoted to various philosophical problems or historical movements.

The Major

Upon completing the first three courses of the Core sequence (Critical Thinking, Philosophy of Human Nature, and Ethics), students may enroll in the Philosophy major program, which has three distinctive features.

Collegial Bookend Seminars: Majors take the proseminar as they begin their work on the major and a senior seminar as they finish it. The proseminar introduces majors to the principal topics in philosophy and emphasizes practice in philosophical writing. The senior seminar focuses on topics in metaphysics and epistemology; it also emphasizes

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philosophical writing.

History of Philosophy Sequence: Majors complete a four-course sequence on the history of philosophy, including ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy.

Flexible Elective Courses: Majors also complete four advanced (400-level) courses in areas of their choosing. This enables advanced students the opportunity to customize their Philosophy major.

The Kossel Track

The Kossel Track is named after Clifford Kossel, S.J., who taught Thomistic philosophy at Gonzaga for many years. It is designed for all students who seek a Philosophy major program that emphasizes Catholic thought. Bishop White seminarians in particular pursue this major in preparation for theological studies. In addition to the Collegial Bookend Seminars and the History of Philosophy Sequence of the Philosophy Major program, the Kossel Track program includes the following:

- **Area Courses:** Kossel students take three courses in traditional areas of Catholic philosophy: Christian Metaphysics, Theory of Knowledge, and either Faith and Reason or Philosophy of God.
- **Supporting Elective Course:** Kossel students complete an additional advanced elective course of their choosing.
- **Additional Religion Study:** Kossel students complete at least one course on Catholicism beyond the three courses of the Religious Studies Core program.
- **Latin Study:** Kossel students complete at least one full year of Latin language.

For more complete descriptions of the Philosophy programs, please consult the Gonzaga University course catalogue at <http://www.gonzaga.edu/catalogues>. Students can also visit the Philosophy department's Web site at www.gonzaga.edu/philosophy. For questions about Bishop White Seminary, e-mail bws@gonzaga.edu or log on to www.bishopwhiteseminary.com.

The Potential

With its focus on central and fundamental questions about reality, truth, and meaning, philosophy is at the heart of the academic life. Philosophical reasoning and familiarity with philosophical concepts and argumentation are therefore central components of intellectual formation. Philosophy hones analytical and communication skills by requiring students to discuss and write about complex ideas. Consequently, students with demanding professional career plans or a broad interest in the humanities will find the study of philosophy invaluable. A degree in and/or a strong knowledge of philosophy can be valuable when applying to a variety of professional schools that actively look for

liberal arts majors, as well as for positions where employers value critical thinking, analytical reflection, and a strong understanding of human morality and values. Philosophy majors routinely outperform other undergraduate majors on the standardized entrance tests for graduate programs in the humanities, business, and the sciences.

Recent Graduates Have Attended the Following Philosophy Graduate Schools:

Boston College
Georgetown University
Purdue University
Arizona State University
University of Notre Dame
Loyola University Chicago

Some Recent Fields of Employment for Philosophy Graduates:

Computer Networking
Education (many levels)
Health Care Administration
Politics/Government Work
Publishing

Gonzaga students majoring in philosophy also often pursue graduate studies in law, medicine, public administration, business, and the social sciences.

The People

A Sample of Faculty Published Works and Accomplishments:

Mark Alfino:

With Randy Mayes, "Limits of Some Formal Approaches to Risk: Directions for Future Research." Delft University of Technology. Delft, Netherlands. June 14, 2006.

Kirk Besmer:

Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology: The Problem of Ideal Objects. Continuum, 2008.

David Calhoun:

"Daniel Dennett's Anti-Rational Altar Call." *Rational Theism in the Public Sphere.* McGill University (Montreal, Quebec, Canada). September 15, 2007.

Brian Clayton:

"Friendship and Family in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*." Presented at Baylor University, October 27, 2007.

Theodore Di Maria, Jr.:

"Is Kant's Theoretical Doctrine of the Self Consistent with the Thesis of Noumenal Ignorance?" Invited paper at Seminar on Phenomenology and Hermeneutics, Marquette University, May 15, 2007.

Doug Kries:

The Problem of Natural Law. Lexington Books, 2007.

Ellen Maccarone:

"The Ethics of Advocacy: Scientists and Environmental Policy." *Environmental Philosophy*, 2 (Spring 2005).

Erik Schmidt:

"Thresholds, Vagueness, and the Psychology of Small Improvements." David Chang (Ed.) *Moral Psychology Today: Essays on Values, Rational Choice, and the Will.* Ed. David Chang. Springer, 2008.

Rose Mary Volbrecht:

With Anita Tarzian, Dianne Hoffman, and Judy Meyers. "The Role of Healthcare Ethics Committee Networks in Shaping Healthcare Policy and Practices." *Healthcare Ethics Committee Forum*, 18 (March 2006).

Faculty Contacts and Specialties:

Mark Alfino, Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin; specializes in the philosophy of language and literature, 20th Century philosophy, philosophical approaches to poverty studies, business ethics, and organizational ethics. (alfino@calvin.gonzaga.edu)

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John Wagner, Ph.D., Catholic University of America; specializes in medieval philosophy, metaphysics, the philosophy of evil, the philosophy of sport, and the philosophy of education. (wagner@calvin.gonzaga.edu)