



Philosophy

Wonder. Experiencing this feeling is how most people first enter the world of philosophy, the passionate quest for understanding. Gonzaga is a Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic university. The study of philosophy has been at the heart of all three of these educational pillars—the heart of humanistic education since the time of Plato, of Catholic education since the time of Augustine, and of Jesuit education since the time of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Indeed, St. Aloysius Gonzaga himself was a philosophy student at 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 life. 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 University **Core Curriculum**, a **minor**, a **major**, and the **Kossel concentration**. 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 Department at Gonzaga University is among the largest in the western United States.**

THE CORE

The sustained study of philosophy is at the very heart of any education that is Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic, all Gonzaga University students complete the following two courses:

Reasoning: This course helps students develop the foundational skills of critical reading, thinking, analysis, and writing. Students will analyze and evaluate different approaches to formal and informal arguments, reconstruct arguments from a range of sources, assess the quality of various types of evidence, and demonstrate careful use of statistics.

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.

To complete the Core Curriculum, students may also take the following two courses:

Ethics: In this course, students will learn to understand, apply, and critique multiple ethical theories, traditions and modes of ethical analysis.

Core Integration Seminar: The CIS engages the Year Four Question: “**Imagining the possible: What is our role in the world?**” by offering students a culminating seminar experience in which students integrate the principles of Jesuit education, prior components of the Core, and their disciplinary expertise. The department will offer CIS’s on numerous topics.

THE MINOR

The Philosophy minor is 21 credits, and 12 of these can be satisfied through the completion of the University Core Curriculum. The minor program features flexibility, since students are permitted to choose their upper-level electives from a large number of courses. These include courses on philosophical issues that arise within a particular profession, such as Health Care Ethics, Business Ethics, and Philosophy of Law. Other 400-level courses are devoted to various philosophical questions, figures, or historical movements, such as Happiness, Philosophy of Technology, Faith & Reason, Existentialism, and Chinese Philosophy.

THE MAJOR

The Philosophy major is 36 credits, 12 of which can be completed through courses in the University Core Curriculum. The major includes a 3-course sequence in the History of Philosophy; topical seminars that focus on philosophical research, discussion, and writing; and a broad range of 400-level electives, which allows students to develop a program of studies tailored to their own interests. Each student is required to take at least one course in contemporary



philosophy, and one course in ethics or political philosophy.

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 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 major in Philosophy.

THE KOSSSEL CONCENTRATION

The Kossel concentration is named after Clifford Kossel, S.J., who taught Thomistic philosophy at Gonzaga for many years. The concentration is open to all students who seek a Philosophy major that emphasizes Catholic thought. It is also designed to provide preparation for advanced professional study of theology. It includes all the requirements for the philosophy major with specialized pre-theology courses. In addition to the philosophy major, Kossel students must complete one year of Latin studies (8 credits).

*For more information about the Philosophy Department and its courses, please visit www.gonzaga.edu/philosophy or consult the Gonzaga course catalogue at www.gonzaga.edu/catalogues

OUTCOMES

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 Gonzaga Philosophy graduates have attended the following graduate programs in philosophy:

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

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

Some recent fields of employment for Philosophy graduates have included:

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

THE PEOPLE

A Sample of Faculty Published Works and Accomplishments:

Mark Alfino

Handbook of Intellectual Freedom: Theories, Concepts, and Cases. Co-edited with Laura Koltutsky. Litwin Press, 2014.

Kirk Besmer

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

David Calhoun

"From Solitary Individualism to Post-Christian Stoic Existentialism: Quests for Community, Moral Agency, and Transcendence in the Films of Clint Eastwood." Chapter in *The Philosophy of Clint Eastwood*. Ed. Brian Clayton and Richard McClelland. University Press of Kentucky, 2014.

"Human Exceptionalism and the Imago Dei: The Tradition of Human Dignity." Chapter in *Human Dignity in Bioethics: From Worldviews to the Public Square*. Ed. Steven C. Dille and Nathan J. Palpant. Routledge Annals of Bioethics. Routledge, 2012.

Brian Clayton & Richard McClelland

The Philosophy of Clint Eastwood. Co-editors. University Press of Kentucky, 2014.

Brian Henning

"Sustainability and Other Ecological Mistakes: In Defense of Moral Ideals." Chapter in *Beyond Superlatives*. Eds. Roland Faber, J.R. Hustwit, & Hollis Phelps. Cambridge Scholars Press, 2014.

Beyond Mechanism: Putting Life Back Into Biology. Co-edited with Adam C. Scarfe. Lexington Books/Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.

Thomas Jeannot

"Gadamer, Dewey, and Marx: Work and Interpretation." *Voyages 2*. (2013).

Michael Tkacz

"Albertus Magnus and the Error of Ptolemy: Metaphysics and the Origins of Empirical Research Programs." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 53, 147-60. (2013).

"St. Augustine's Appropriation and Transformation of Aristotelian Eudaimonia." Chapter in *The Reception of Aristotle's Ethics*. Ed. Jon Miller. Cambridge University Press, 2013. 67-84.

Ellen Maccarone

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

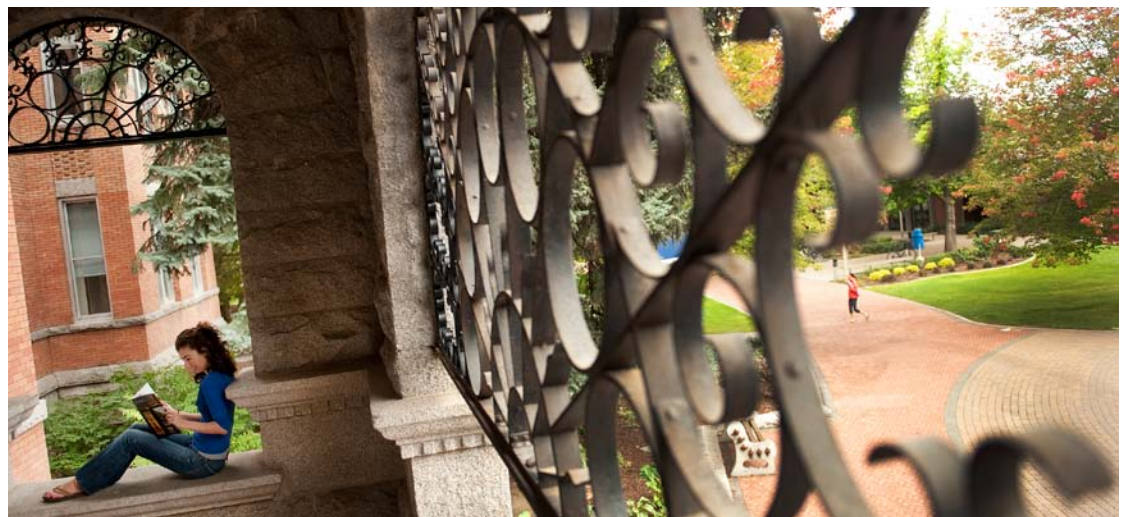
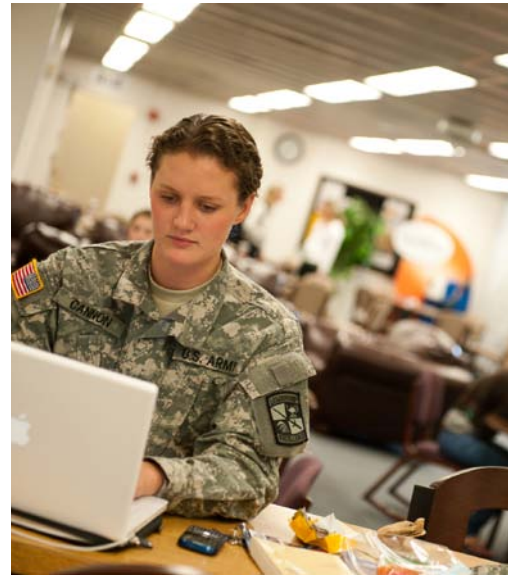
Erik Schmidt

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

Rose Mary Volbrecht

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

*See back page for a full list of faculty members.



FACULTY CONTACT & SPECIALTIES

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philosophy of language and literature, 20th Century philosophy, philosophical approaches to poverty studies, business ethics, and organizational ethics
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