



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Why be good? What is thinking? What is knowledge, and do we have any? Is free will possible? Is time real, or is it an illusion? What is the idea of the infinite? Philosophy at Brandeis teaches you not just what to think, but how to think and how to analyze complex problems, raise questions and come up with imaginative solutions. The skills it develops — communication and critical thinking skills, as well as the capacity to empathize with others — are essential, not only to becoming good citizens of the world but also to the pursuit of almost any career.

What makes the program distinctive?

The Brandeis philosophy program is among the top-ranked undergraduate programs in the country. Our faculty members are highly regarded within their fields, and students regularly interact closely with their professors. Philosophy majors have gone on to law school, medical

school and business school and into international diplomacy and the high-tech industry. Recent graduates have successfully pursued careers in filmmaking, working for the FBI and doing further graduate study in philosophy.

FAST FACTS

Current number of majors and minors: 84

Number of faculty: 10

Can you minor in this program? Yes

Emphasis within the major: epistemology, ethics, history of philosophy, logic, metaphysics, philosophy of mind and language, political philosophy

Popular second majors: classical studies, economics, English, legal studies, politics, women's and gender studies

Website: brandeis.edu/departments/philosophy

ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

Colloquium Series

The department invites renowned philosophers from other universities to present their work, providing students with an opportunity to keep up with the most recent debates within the field.

Crossing disciplinary boundaries

Many of our courses cut across disciplinary boundaries. In "Environmental Ethics," students engage in fieldwork as well as explore the ethics of food production and land conservation. "Consciousness, Brain and Self" combines cognitive science and brain science with work in philosophy. "The Idea of the Market" draws together philosophy, politics, economics, business and sociology. "Aesthetics: Photography, Painting and Film" explores studio art and art history as well as English, film and media studies, and philosophy.

Building an academic community

Our students are bridge-builders. Every year the students host a social gathering called "Meet the Majors," which provides opportunities to interact with faculty and students with similar interests. Both the undergraduate and graduate students host conferences featuring papers from fellow philosophy students from all over the country.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Senior thesis

Philosophy majors may pursue honors by writing an essay or thesis in their senior year. Departmental honors are awarded on the basis of excellence in all courses applied to the major as well as the essay or thesis.

Philosophy prize

At the end of every academic year the department awards a philosophy prize to the student who has contributed the most to philosophy among those currently majoring in the subject.

Faculty awards

Marion Smiley has been named the J.P. Morgan Chase Professor of Philosophy, Eli Hirsch is the Charles Goldman Chair in Philosophy, and Palle Yourgrau was appointed recently to the Harry A. Wolfson Chair of Philosophy. Andreas Teuber is the recipient of two of the university's highest

teaching awards, the Kermit Perlmutter and Michael Walzer Awards for Excellence in Teaching.

Faculty publications

Recent faculty publications include Palle Yourgrau's "The Dead" in a volume of "The Metaphysics of Death" and Marion Smiley's "Pragmatism and the Philosophy of 'The Practical'" in "Five Questions for Pragmatism."

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Student-run clubs

Philosophy majors have the opportunity to participate in student-run organizations such as the Brandeis Academic Debate and Speech Society and Brandeis University Mock Trial Association (BUMTA). BUMTA competes in the American Mock Trial Association's tournaments against other colleges from around the country. The club also provides an introduction to the real-world courtroom experience. BUMTA provides members a chance to improve speaking, logical analysis and theatrical skills.

Summer internships

Philosophy major Natalia B. '12 interned in 2010 with the Greater Boston Legal Services working on the "Latinas, Know Your Rights" project. The project works to unite Latinas to create social change and to end domestic violence. Natalia assisted in the legal representation of battered immigrant women in family law, benefits and immigration cases. In addition, she conducted research and writing for an ongoing systemic reform project to educate probate and family court judges and family law attorneys on the issues facing immigrant women in family court.

AFTER BRANDEIS

Diverse career paths

One recent philosophy graduate was chosen from among hundreds of applicants to study health policy as a Barbara Jordan Health Policy Scholar; others were recently accepted into Harvard Medical School, Harvard Law School and New York University Law School. One student is in China starting a business, and another is clerking for federal Judge Sidney Stein at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

"Philosophy begins in wonder."

Descartes, "The Discourse on Method," 1637



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