Bachelor of Arts in philosophy

Program information

College	Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters		
Department or school	Department of Philosophy		
Degree abbreviation	B.A.	**CIP code**	38.0101
Program website	www.fau.edu/artsandletters/philosophy/ba		

Our commitment to you

This Academic Learning Compact describes the program's mission, what students who complete the program will know and be able to do and how faculty assess that learning. Florida Atlantic University publishes a compact for every degree program and standalone certificate so students, families, employers and the community can see what each program commits to providing its graduates.

Program mission

The philosophy major helps students think clearly and carefully about fundamental questions. Students learn major philosophical theories and thinkers, build strong reasoning skills and learn to research and write philosophical essays.

Florida Atlantic University's mission

Florida Atlantic University is recognized as an opportunity university and R1 research institution dedicated to transforming lives through education, discovery, and innovation. We empower students to achieve economic mobility, advance knowledge that creates meaningful impact, and forge partnerships that drive prosperity and connection in the communities we serve.

How the program supports the university mission

The major supports the university's mission by transforming lives through education and opening doors to opportunity. Students build the reasoning, research and writing skills that prepare them for law, graduate study and many other careers.

About the program

Philosophy majors study the big questions about knowledge, reality, ethics and reasoning, and the thinkers who shaped them. Students learn to build and test arguments, and the major ends with a senior seminar. The major is a great fit for students who love to question, debate and write.

Student learning outcomes

By graduation, students will be able to demonstrate outcomes in three core areas: content/discipline knowledge and skills (Outcome 1), communication skills (Outcome 2) and critical thinking skills (Outcome 3). Faculty assess all three core outcomes every year.

A. Content/Discipline Knowledge and Skills

What graduates will know and be able to do in their field

Areas this program addresses (check at least two)

- ☒ **Declarative knowledge:** key vocabulary, history, theories and concepts of the field
- ☒ **Research skills:** finding, gathering, analyzing and reporting information the way the field does
- ☐ **Technical skills:** hands-on tools and methods of the field, such as software, instruments, lesson plans or business reports

Graduates will be able to use basic philosophical concepts and vocabulary and explain the positions of historically important philosophers.
Graduates will be able to research a philosophical topic through library research and close review of philosophical texts.

How students show it

Research papers and bibliographical essays written in the senior seminar, the capstone of the major.

Where it is assessed

PHI 4938 Senior Seminar

B. Communication Skills

How graduates will share ideas and work with others

Areas this program addresses (check at least two)

- ☒ **Written communication:** clear, well-organized writing suited to the audience and purpose
- ☒ **Oral communication:** well-organized presentations that connect with an audience
- ☐ **Other forms of communication:** visual, media, performance or exhibit work
- ☐ **Team/collaborative communication:** contributing to group projects and shared goals

Graduates will be able to write well-organized, grammatically correct philosophical essays that meet the standards of the field. Students will also be able to orally present their work in an organized and engaging way.

How students show it

Final papers written in the senior seminar and oral presentation in senior seminar.

Where it is assessed

PHI 4938 Senior Seminar

C. Critical Thinking Skills

How graduates will analyze, create and solve problems

Areas this program addresses (check at least one)

- ☒ **Analytical skills:** weighing evidence, comparing ideas and judging arguments
- ☐ **Creative skills:** combining knowledge to create something new, such as a design, performance or proposal
- ☐ **Practical skills:** applying knowledge to real situations, such as a business proposal, lesson plan or grant

Graduates will be able to analyze a philosophical argument for its validity, soundness and strength. Graduates will be able to build counterarguments and respond to objections against philosophical positions.

How students show it

A series of written essays completed in the senior seminar.

Where it is assessed

PHI 4938 Senior Seminar

Assessment approaches

Every year, faculty review samples of student work to see how well students are meeting all three outcomes, and they use what they learn to improve the program.

Faculty review the research papers, presentations and final papers students write and present in the senior seminar, the capstone of the major. They look at knowledge of philosophical theories and thinkers, strength of reasoning, research and quality of writing.

Assessment methods may change over time.