Ashoka Philosophy Student Handbook

Version Monsoon Semester 2022

Prepared by the Philosophy Department Faculty

September 19, 2022

Note: In case of conflict between this handbook and the information on the Philosophy Department website, the website should be considered the most up to date version.

Contents

1 Why Philosophy?

If you study philosophy at Ashoka, you will explore the deepest, most pressing questions at the heart of intellectual inquiry. You will become familiar with the thoughts of renowned historical figures from across the world, like Socrates, Nāgārjuna, Kǒngzǐ (Confucius), Nietzsche, Ambedkar, and dozens of others. You will also read cutting edge research by contemporary philosophers on topics like the ethics of artificial intelligence or the challenges posed by climate change.

Students who study philosophy learn to read, write, discuss, and think in a deep, searching, thoughtful manner. They become prepared to flourish in all kinds of careers, from consulting, journalism, law, business, and many others. An Ashoka philosophy education also puts students in an excellent position to pursue graduate studies in philosophy if they so choose.

Philosophy ranges over many disparate topics, like the philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, ethics, political philosophy, logic, metaphyics, epistemlogy, and many others. Our department offers courses in these topics and many more, both from historical and contemporary perspectives.

The Philosophy faculty at Ashoka is world class and is dedicated to providing a compelling, challenging, and illuminating education to all of our students. There are many opportunities for independent studies, and students interested in independent research can write a thesis in their fourth year.

In addition to the pure Philosophy major, minor, and concentration, we offer interdisciplinary majors in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE); Philosophy and Computer Science (PHICS), and Psychology and Philosophy (PSYPHI).

2   Philosophy Major Requirements

To earn a Philosophy Major, students must complete at least 12 courses (48 credits) in Philosophy. The 12 courses are:

- PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy

- PHI-1060: Symbolic Logic

- Two courses in the **Indian and Non-Western Philosophy** category

- Two courses in the **History of Western Philosophy** category

- Three courses from the **Contemporary Core** category

- Three **Elective** courses (any Philosophy course)

Note: No more than 2 cross-listed courses that are offered by non-Philosophy faculty members can count toward the major. There is no cap on the number of cross-listed courses offered by Philosophy faculty members that can count towards the major.

3   Philosophy Advanced Major Requirements

To earn an Advanced Philosophy Major, students must complete at least 16 courses (48 credits) in Philosophy. The 16 courses are:

- PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy

- PHI-1060: Symbolic Logic

- Two courses in the **Indian and Non-Western Philosophy** category

- Two courses in the **History of Western Philosophy** category

- Three courses from the **Contemporary Core** category

- Seven **Elective** courses (any Philosophy course)

Note: No more than 2 cross-listed courses that are offered by non-Philosophy faculty members can count toward the major. There is no cap on the number of cross-listed courses offered by Philosophy faculty members that can count towards the major.

Note: Up to 4 credits overall can come from serving as a Teaching Assistant (TA). These credits count toward the Elective category.

4 Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE) Major Requirements

Students must complete 16 major courses from the three disciplines of Political Science, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) to complete this interdisciplinary major. From each of the three subject areas in PPE, students will choose a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 courses, with a combined total of 16. Those who do 8 courses in one subject (X) will graduate in 'PPE, with specialization in X'. This will be stated on their transcripts. For more information on PPE, see the PPE website.

4.1 Political Science

A PPE major must complete at least four Political Science courses.
   Those taking only four courses must complete:

- Introduction to Indian Politics

- Western Political Thought (I) or Introduction to Political Theory

- Introduction to Comparative Politics

- One additional Political Science course

   For students completing only four Political Science courses, at most one cross-listed Political Science course can count towards the major.
   For the specialization in political science, PPE majors must additionally complete four Political Science courses beyond the four required courses. At most two cross-listed Political Science courses can count towards a PPE major with specialization in political science.

4.2 Philosophy

A PPE major must complete at least four Philosophy courses:

- PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy

- PHI-1060: Symbolic Logic (only required for UG23 and earlier; UG24 and later can complete any Philosophy elective)

- Two Philosophy courses in two different categories from these three categories: **Indian and Non-Western Philosophy**, **History of Western Philosophy**, **Contemporary Core**

All four Philosophy courses must be taught by Philosophy faculty (that is, they cannot be cross-listed courses taught by faculty in other departments like Political Science).

For a specialization in Philosophy, students must complete the following courses:

- PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy

- PHI-1060: Symbolic Logic (Only required for UG23 and earlier; UG24 and later can complete any elective)

- Three Philosophy courses in two different categories from these three categories: **Indian and Non-Western Philosophy**, **History of Western Philosophy**, **Contemporary Core**

- Three other Philosophy courses

At least four Philosophy courses must be taught by Philosophy faculty (that is, they cannot be cross-listed courses taught by faculty in other departments like Political Science).

Note that a student cannot both major in PPE and minor in Philosophy.

4.3 Economics

A PPE major must complete four Economics courses:

- Introduction to Economics

- Mathematics for Economists

- Microeconomic Theory I

- Macroeconomic Theory I

A specialization in Economics requires 8 courses. There are two possibilities:
Economics Specialization Option One:

- Introduction to Economics

- Mathematics for Economists

- Microeconomic Theory I

- Macroeconomic Theory I

- Statistics for Economics

- Econometrics

- Any two of: Macroeconomics Theory II, Microeconomics Theory II, any 3000 level Economics course

Economics Specialization Option Two:

- Introduction to Economics

- Mathematics for Economists

- Microeconomic Theory I

- Macroeconomic Theory I

- Macroeconomic Theory II

- Microeconomic Theory II

- Any two of: Statistics for Economics, Econometrics, any 3000 level Economics course

5 Philosophy and Computer Science (PHICS) Major Requirements

The following courses are mandatory:

- PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy

- PHI-1060: Symbolic Logic

- CS-1101: Introduction to Computer Programming

- CS-1104: Discrete Mathematics

- CS-1216: Computer Organization and Systems

- CS-1205: Algorithm Design and Analysis

- CS-1309: Introduction to Machine Learning

- CS-1340: Computer Networks

- CS-1319: Programming Language, Design and Implementation

- CS-2349/PHI-2070 :Theory of Computation or Introduction to Computability Theory

- One course from between PHI-X600 and PHI-X829 (Ethics)

- One course from either of the following categories: between PHI-X240 and PHI-X299 (Philosophy of Science or Philosophy of Mathematics) or between PHI-X300 and PHI-X359 (Philosophy of Language)

- Any three Philosophy courses

- Any two Computer Science courses

6 Psychology and Philosophy (PSYPHI) Major Requirements

The following courses are mandatory:

- PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy

- PSY-1001: Introduction to Psychology OR PSY-1003: Thinking Like a Psychologist

- PSY-2001: Statistics and Research Methods I

- PSY-2002: Statistics and Research Methods II

- Any three out of the following:

    - PSY-2011: Biological Psychology
    - PSY-2021: Cognitive Psychology
    - PSY-2031: Developmental Psychology
    - PSY-2041: Clinical Psychology
    - PSY-2051: Social Psychology

- Five more courses from Philosophy

- Four more courses from Philosophy or Psychology or both

7 Philosophy Minor and Concentration Requirements

7.1 Philosophy Minor

To earn a Minor in Philosophy, students must complete at least 6 courses (24 credits) in Philosophy.

UG23 and earlier:

- PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy

- PHI-1060: Symbolic Logic

UG24 and later:

- PHI-1000: Intro to Philosophy

- One **Elective** course (any Philosophy course)

Everybody:

- One course from the **Indian and Non-Western Philosophy** category

- One course from from the **History of Western Philosophy** category

- One course from the **Contemporary Core** category

- One **Elective** (any Philosophy course)

Note: No more than 2 cross-listed courses that are offered by non-Philosophy faculty members can count toward the minor. There is no cap on the number of cross-listed courses offered by Philosophy faculty members that can count towards the minor.

7.2   Philosophy Concentration

To earn a Concentration in Philosophy students must complete at least four courses (16 credits) in Philosophy.
 UG23 and earlier:

- PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy

- PHI-1060: Symbolic Logic

- Two further courses in two different categories from among the three categories: **Indian and Non-Western Philosophy**, **History of Western Philosophy**, **Contemporary Core**

UG24 and later:

- PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy

- Three further courses in at least two different categories from among the three categories: **Indian and Non-Western Philosophy**, **History of Western Philosophy**, **Contemporary Core**

All courses in a Philosophy concentration must be taught by Philosophy faculty.

8   Philosophy Capstone Thesis

A Capstone Thesis is a lengthy research paper (often 15 or more pages) on some topic in philosophy. It is an opportunity for students to learn how to conduct independent research in philosophy and to thoroughly explore a topic they are interested in.

Students who wish to write a Capstone Thesis should include this information when they register for the ASP (around mid-March of their third year).

Students must also fill out an ASP Capstone Registration form and secure the approval of their advisor in Spring semester of their third year.

Requirements for Philosophy Capstone Thesis

- Enrollment in ASP

  Most Philosophy Capstone Thesis writers will be Philosophy majors, but a Philosophy major is not required. PPE students and others can write a Philosophy Capstone Thesis in their ASP year if they meet the other requirements

- Agreement from a Philosophy professor to advise the Capstone Thesis

- Registration in the Philosophy Capstone Thesis Seminar during both ASP semesters

- Submission of an annotated bibliography and prospectus at the end of Monsoon semester

- Submission of thesis draft to second reader partway through Spring semester

- Submission of thesis final draft at the end of Spring semester

9   Course Categories

There are five categories of Philosophy courses: **Introductory**, **Contemporary Core**, **Indian and Non-Western Philosophy**, **History of Western Philosophy**, and **Elective Only**. The introductory courses are PHI-1000: Introduction to Philosophy and PHI-1060: Symbolic Logic. All other courses fall into one or more of the other categories.

Any Philosophy course can count as an **Elective** course for the purposes of satisfying course requirements, as long as that course is not satisfying some other requirement. (For example, you cannot use PHI-2370: Introduction to Indian Philosophy to satisfy an **Elective** requirement and also to satisfy an **Indian and Non-Western Philsophy** requirement.)

The websites listing current and future courses in philosophy and past courses in philosophy include information about each course's category. If you are unsure about which category or categories a course fits in to, you can check this website or ask the professor who is teaching the course.

10   Philosophy Society

The Ashoka Philosophy Society (PhilSoc) is an academic society that aims to make philosophy more accessible by illustrating how it is intrinsically linked not only to the liberal arts, but also to the process of thinking in general. It hosts a number of events over the academic year. It organizes India's only undergraduate Philosophy conference, PhilCon. It is involved in the making of Citta, Ashoka's student-run, peer-reviewed undergraduate philosophy journal.

PhilSoc can be reached at philsoc@ashoka.edu.in.

11   Philosophy Helpdesk

The Philosophy Helpdesk is a student initiative designed to provide help with critical thinking and academic writing in Philosophy. Tutors at the Helpdesk are 3rd year and 4th year Philosophy majors who are available to peer-review your assignments and assist you with structuring your argument for a paper, feedback on a draft, concept clarification, homework sums and more.

   Appointments can be taken for the same on the sheets sent out by philhelpdesk@ashoka.edu.in. The Philosophy Helpdesk is organized by the Student Representatives.

12   FAQs

Do I need to enroll in philosophy courses in a specific order?
You do not need to enroll in philosophy courses in a specific order. If a course has a prerequisite, this will be listed in the course catalog. Most courses do not have prerequisites.

Can I write a thesis before my fourth year?
Yes; you can follow the thesis timeline by setting up an Independent Study Module (ISM) with a professor who agrees to advise your thesis.

Can I write a thesis if I am not a Philosophy major?
Yes; as long as you follow the requirements for a Philosophy Capstone Thesis, you may write a thesis, no matter what your major is. Note that unless you have majored in Philosophy, PPE, PSYPHI, or PHICS, it may be difficult to find a Philosophy professor to advise your thesis, because if you do not have a lot of experience in Philosophy courses you may not have the skills necessary to write a thesis.

Can I write a thesis before my fourth year?
Yes; you can follow the thesis timeline by setting up an Independent Study Module (ISM) with a professor who agrees to advise your thesis.

Can any of the degree requirements be waived?
In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to waive certain degree requirements for Philosophy or any of the interdisciplinary majors. You can ask the Philosophy Head of Department and your academic advisor for more information.

My question is not listed here. Who should I ask?
If you have additional questions you can contact the Philosophy Student Representatives or any Philosophy professor.