



The Department of Philosophy and Religion introduces students to the great philosophical ideas and traditions. Students engage with timeless questions about the meaning of life, how to be ethical and the nature of reality itself — but they also use philosophy to solve contemporary, real-world problems. A major or minor in philosophy can be helpful to students considering law school, medical school or graduate school in a wide variety of fields, and is easily combined with other majors and minors. Above, professor Steven Geisz leads students through qigong exercises during a May Term course on Chinese yoga and meditation.

## What Will You Learn?

The **philosophy major** at UT hones skills of critical thinking and logic and prompts students to think analytically about both “big questions” and modern-day, real-world problems. Students learn about the history of philosophical systems and ideas, and they engage with a variety of philosophical issues in ethical theory, applied ethics (environmental, business and biomedical ethics), social and political philosophy, aesthetics, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion and Asian philosophy. As a capstone experience, students may choose to complete a senior thesis project that involves researching particular philosophical topics with a faculty mentor.

The department also offers a **minor in philosophy**, and contributes key courses to the interdisciplinary **Asian studies minor**, which focuses on the history, culture and politics of East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent.

Philosophy can be a stand-alone major, but students are encouraged to consider completing the degree as part of a double major. Both the philosophy major and minor are designed to be combined easily with majors and minors in other fields. The philosophy major requires only nine courses and the minor requires five.

### Religious Studies

The department offers many courses that explore the philosophical foundations of religious belief and traditions. A course on world religions is offered regularly, and the philosophy of religion (including traditional theology) and the philosophy of Asian religions are taught in multiple courses. In addition, students can participate in discussions about faith, religious values and spirituality and engage in interfaith conversations through a variety of programs connected to UT’s Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values.

THE UNIVERSITY  
OF TAMPA

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

Minor in Philosophy

Minor in Asian Studies

Courses in Religious Studies and  
Philosophy of Religion

### Topics of Study

The philosophy program offers courses in many different fields, including:

- ethical theory
- the history of ethics
- applied ethics
- history of philosophy
- philosophy of art
- philosophy of film
- philosophy of mind
- philosophy of science
- political philosophy and theories of democracy
- logic and critical thinking
- philosophy of religion
- Indian, Buddhist and Chinese philosophy

## FACULTY highlights



**Steven Geisz**  
 professor

Steven Geisz's research and teaching interests include classical Chinese philosophy, the philosophy of mind and language and political philosophy. His current research focuses on the ways in which body practices such as yoga, qigong, tai chi and the martial arts can be seen as embodiments of philosophical ideas. A graduate of Duke University, he has also studied Chinese language and philosophy at Tsinghua University in Beijing.



**Marcus Arvan**  
 associate professor

Marcus Arvan specializes in ethics, political philosophy, human rights and free will. He is actively engaged in research on the ethics of war, the nature of justification in ethical theory and the philosophy of mind. Arvan coaches two debate teams at UT, which compete annually in the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl and Bioethics Bowl. He is also the creator and moderator of The Philosophers' Cocoon, an online forum for early-career philosophers.

## Student/Faculty Research

Philosophy students can work one-on-one with faculty to do philosophical research, contributing to ongoing debates in the field and to broader public discussions. Research is completed in the form of independent studies, senior thesis projects or honors tutorials sponsored by the UT Honors Program. Student research can lead to publications in academic journals and to opportunities to travel to conferences to present results and contribute to ongoing conversations in the field.

Examples of recent student/faculty research topics include:

- The nature of consciousness (Matt Weinberg with Professor Arvan)
- Simone de Beauvoir's ethical theory (Eden Garms with Professor Sweeney)
- The nature of moral normativity (Alex Kruschik with Professor Arvan)
- Chinese philosophy and health practices (Elsie Lopez with Professor Geisz)
- The ethics of cosmetic surgery (Joscelyn Cooper with Professor Arvan)
- Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of emotions and his critique of Freud's theory of emotions (Alice Walker with Professor Sweeney)
- The ethics of economic markets (Megan Teague with Professor Arvan)
- Chinese military classics and strategies (Bradley Nessler with Professor Geisz)
- Ethical issues concerned with voluntary active euthanasia (Thien Van Caij with Professor Sweeney)
- Philosophical problem of "fearing fictions" specifically with regard to viewing films (Charles Cataldo with Professor Sweeney)
- Human rights, liberal democracy and Asian philosophy (Charles Cataldo with Professor Sweeney)
- Ayn Rand's ethics (Eden Garms with Professor Arvan)



### Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl

Led by associate professor Marcus Arvan, UT's Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl team recently went 3-1 at the Southeast Regional Competition, beating out 20 other teams from throughout the Southeast and advancing to the national competition for the third straight year.

## Sample Courses

- Existentialism
- Morality of War
- Ancient Philosophy: Plato and Aristotle
- Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant
- Contemporary Philosophy
- Africana Philosophy
- Logic
- Aesthetics
- Indian and Asian Philosophy
- Social and Political Philosophy
- Feminist Philosophy
- Minds, Brains and Metaphysics
- Daoism
- Philosophy of Emotions
- Film Aesthetics
- Theories of Democracy
- Chinese Philosophy

# What Can You Do With This Degree?

If you are interested in pursuing a life enriched by philosophy or religion, there are many ways to turn your passion into a career path. Both areas of study lay a good foundation for graduate work in other fields and will infuse your pursuits with a deep knowledge and awareness of the inquiries that have inspired humans for ages. Philosophical understanding offers you a skill set that can be applied to almost any career you wish to pursue.

Due to the transferable skills they gain in written and oral communication, critical thinking, problem solving, analysis, research, leadership, collaboration and team work, philosophy majors are prepared to excel in an array of fields. Philosophy majors often go into law, government and business professions, or politics.

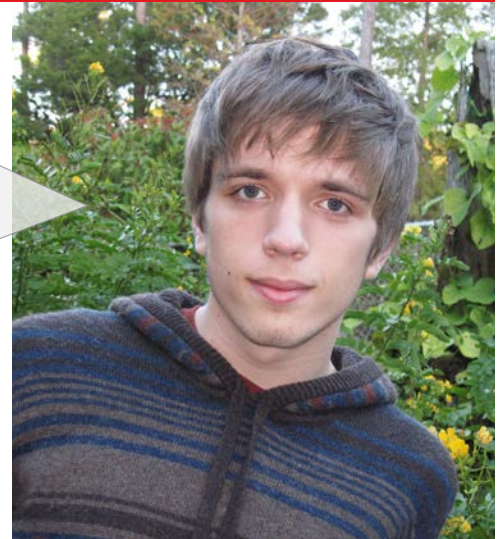
They also may become writers, editors, lobbyists, librarians, archivists, historians, journalists, clergy members, social workers, mediators, consultants, researchers, computer scientists, teachers and more. Earning a graduate degree will allow you to teach as a professor of philosophy or religion.

According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, philosophy majors tend to be better prepared for graduate school than most other majors. They score:

- **Higher on the LSAT** (Law School Admission Test) than every other major besides economics and mathematics.
- **Higher on the GMAT** (business school test) than every major aside from mathematics.
- **Higher on the verbal portion of the GRE** (graduate school admissions test) than every other major.
- **Higher on the quantitative portion of the GRE** than every other humanities major.

**John R. Williams '13**  
**philosophy major,**  
**Asian studies minor;**  
**Honors at Oxford study abroad program**

“At UT I tackled a host of perennial philosophical issues through amazing contemporary and historical perspectives, ranging from Africana philosophy to the stifling relativism of Zhuangzi. The Department of Philosophy provided me with the analytic tools for a diverse array of career options. Not only can a philosophy degree pave a path toward monetary success, but it seems the most valuable major as an end in itself.”



## alumni profile

### Other Success Stories

**Bradley Nessl '11**  
 Commissioned officer in U.S. Marine Corps

**Megan Teague '10**  
 Norman P. McClelland Distinguished Fellow, Goldwater Institute, Phoenix, AZ

**Randall Johnson '10**  
 Pursuing M.A. in teaching social sciences, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

**Devin Weider '09**  
 The Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, Ryugasaki-shi, Ibaraki, Japan

**Shannon Grippando '09**  
 Instructor at American TESOL Institute, Tampa, FL

The starting median salary for philosophy majors with a bachelor's degree is \$39,900, and the mid-career median salary is \$81,200 — higher than the salaries for people who majored in business, biology or communications.

(Pay Scale Salary Survey, [payscale.com](http://payscale.com))

## College of Arts and Letters

# Philosophy and Religion



**Sarah MacDonagh '20**  
**Major: philosophy and applied sociology double major**  
**Minor: law, justice and advocacy**  
**Hometown: Norfolk, MA**  
**Activities: Honors Program, Philosophy Club and Sociology Club**

"The highlight of the program is absolutely the professors. They really care about their students, and their experiences make for unique learning opportunities. I hope to attend law school after graduation. Philosophy teaches one to think critically, read closely and perform analyses logically — skills that are an asset in law school."

### Student Organizations

Become a member of UT's **Ethics Bowl Team**. The Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl is a national annual debate competition where teams of students from schools across the U.S. gather to debate contemporary ethical issues ranging from "sex-ting" to capital punishment, from abortion to gun control.

Students interested in discussing philosophical issues or attending philosophy-related events are invited to join **Phil-Anon**, UT's philosophy club.

Outside the Department of Philosophy and Religion, UT has 10 extracurricular student organizations where religious issues are the primary focus. A number of programs are also sponsored throughout the year by UT's Resource Team for Faith, Values and Spirituality. Frequently held in the **Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values**, these programs create additional opportunities for meaningful interfaith conversations.

### Honors Program

In recent years, philosophy majors have earned competitive Oxford Study Abroad Fellowships from the UT Honors Program and spent a semester studying at Oxford University in Great Britain. Other philosophy students have received funding from the UT Honors Program to support research projects done in conjunction with philosophy faculty.

The Honors Program fosters a close-knit atmosphere among the most inquisitive, intellectually spirited and enterprising students. Innovative courses and one-on-one tutorials promote learning in ways that go beyond the classroom and regular coursework. At Honors Symposia, faculty and guest speakers from across the nation and globe bring students together to discuss stimulating topics. The program also sponsors community service projects and travel-study courses. Students may choose to live among their peers on Honors floors in University residence halls.



### About UT

The University of Tampa is a medium-sized, private university offering more than 200 undergraduate and graduate programs of study. Richly diverse, UT is the school of choice for approximately 9,600 students from all 50 states and 10 countries.

Visit [ut.edu/philosophyandreligion](http://ut.edu/philosophyandreligion) to learn more about at UT and the Department of Philosophy and Religion.



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