

**The Department of Philosophy
Philosophy Element**

**General Education Program
Pacific Lutheran University**

Framing Language and Program Goals

Philosophy is from the Greek word *philosophia*, which can be translated “love of wisdom,” or “friend of wisdom.” To be a friend of philosophy, then, is certainly to seek understanding of the history and development of philosophy as it engages the world, but more notably it is to take up the question, “How do I live philosophically, ethically or in ways that make a difference?” Seen in this light, philosophy examines basic issues in all fields and explores connections among diverse areas of life. The major intersects with questions such as: How can humans gain knowledge about their world? What is the ethical treatment of research animals? When should a nation go to war? Is it *ever* justified? Philosophers ask about the nature of the human person. Are there moral, aesthetic, and religious values that can be adopted rationally and used to guide our decisions? Philosophy majors have gone on to practice law, study science, enter the world of business or journalism.

General Education Element Description

Interpreting Living Traditions for a Humane Future

Drawing on the rich traditions of languages and literatures, religion, and philosophy, the Humanities cultivates an intellectual and imaginative connection between a living past and the global challenges of our future. Humanities courses engage the complex traditions that shape the ways we think about and act in the world.

Philosophy (4) Philosophy cultivates, through reasoned argument, the individual ability to develop responses to life’s deepest questions and most significant decisions. Students engage collectively in a sustained and systematic examination of fundamental concepts about meaning, thought, and action important to human existence.

Students who take philosophy engage in a systematic and sustained examination of the basic concepts of life, such as justice, knowledge, goodness, and the self. By scrutinizing methods, assumptions, and implications, they are able to explore lifelong questions of meaning, thought, and action. They acquire historical perspective on the diversity of human thought and tolerance for the considered opinions of others. Through the collective exploration of, and reasoned argument over, difficult ideas, students develop autonomy in their decision making. Philosophy is vital to the formation of meaning and purpose in students' lives and provides an indispensable framework for developing a sense of vocation--Who am I? What values should we hold? What really is the common good to which I might contribute? What kind of life should I live? In short, the active study of philosophy is essential "to empower students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care--for other persons, for the community and for the earth."

General Education Element Learning Outcomes

The department has set learning goals and objectives for lower division General Education courses. They are as follows:

- 1) Skills:
 - a) Writing Skills--Develop argumentation skills (clarity and analysis). Their papers should be clear and accessible and get a point across. Multiple papers and multiple drafts are good methods for achieving this. Modeling effective writing in the texts being read and with other students’ papers help as well.
 - b) Oral Communication--Help them be organized in what they say. One can emphasize an oral presentation and/or general class participation.

- c) Reasoning--Be able to evaluate and provide reasoned justification for beliefs.
- 2) Values and beliefs:
 - Tolerance and autonomy--Students will respect the considered moral opinion of others and show independence in decision making and in shaping their own values.
- 3) Content:
 - A critical sense of some aspect of the Western philosophic tradition.

Alignment to the ILOs

Critical Reflection

Expression

Interaction with Others

Valuing

Multiple Frameworks