

Philosophy Major & Minor Advising Syllabus

Dr. Deke Gould

Augustana College

Fall 2026

I'm very pleased that you also enjoy the study of philosophy, and that you've committed to the pursuit of a major or minor course of study with us at Augustana College. I'm looking forward to seeing your growth and development as an independent, critical thinker. I've put together this document just to lay out some basic expectations, goals, and to have some handy resources for anyone who is committed to the study of my beloved discipline.

Contents:

- Basics
- Expectations
- Telos
- Helpful Scholarly and Developmental Resources
- Some Opportunities that are Great for Undergraduate Students

Basics: the major and minor, requirements and suggestions

course catalogue: <https://www.augustana.edu/academics/areas-of-study/philosophy/courses>

- Philosophy Major (32 credits):
 - Logic Requirement (4 credits): either PHIL 100 Critical Reasoning or PHIL 300 Formal Logic
 - suggestion: the earlier you take either of these courses, the better
 - the tools you will study in these classes will help you hone your skills for other philosophy courses in particular, but frankly all of your classes in general
 - suggestion: students interested in a career in law should take PHIL 100, followed shortly after by PHIL 300, and follow that with an LSAT prep course
 - note: PHIL 100 is only offered in the Fall
 - History Requirement (8 credits): take two of either PHIL 200 History of Great Ideas, PHIL 201 Classical Philosophy, or PHIL 203 Modern Philosophy
 - suggestion: most students take these in their second year, one in Fall and one in Spring
 - Advanced Requirement (8 credits): take two classes at either 300 or 400 level
 - Elective Requirement (8 credits): take any other two philosophy courses
 - Advanced Seminar (4 credits): PHIL 440 is required for the major, typically completed in either the third or fourth year

- note: this course is only offered every two years; thus, some students must take it their third year while others must take it their fourth year
 - note: this course is only offered in the Fall
- Senior Inquiry: either (a) the student completes an SI project for another major (in which case the Philosophy Department waives the requirement), or (b) the student completes an PHIL 460 SI directed study (1 credit) in the spring with their PHIL 440 instructor, or (c) the student completes the PHIL 450 thesis (see below)
- Optional Senior Thesis (4 credits): PHIL 450 is only recommended for students who are seriously considering graduate study in philosophy
 - note: 2 credits are completed in the fall, and 2 more in the spring
 - suggestion: if a student is interested in this option, they should reach out to a potential thesis advisor about the project before the end of their third year
- Philosophy Minor (20 credits):
 - Logic Requirement (4 credits): either PHIL 100 or PHIL 300
 - History Requirement (4 credits): either PHIL 200, PHIL 201, or PHIL 203
 - Advanced Requirement (4 credits): one of any PHIL class at either 300 or 400 level
 - Elective Requirement (8 credits): take any other two philosophy courses

Expectations:

- The student's progress on their philosophy major/minor requirements, general education requirements, and all other progress toward the satisfaction of their degree is their responsibility.
- The advisor's role is to provide advice on the completion of these requirements, but more importantly, to regularly meet with and discuss the meaning of their study of philosophy as a whole, the student's philosophical interests in general, professional development opportunities (such as conference presentations, undergraduate journal publications, etc.), and if the student so wishes, future plans for graduate study in philosophy.
 - To be clear, however, I have absolutely no expectations that my advisees will study philosophy in graduate school after their time at Augustana College. The study of philosophy at the undergraduate level can enrich anyone's life, regardless of their future plans.
- The advisor will be available to meet before the student's fall and spring registration, and will review the student's progress on completing their graduation requirements on Arches with them during these meetings at least once per semester.
- The student is responsible for contacting and arranging an appointment with the advisor in a timely fashion, giving at least twenty four hours notice (but preferably arranging an appointment about a week in advance).

- All of my philosophy major or minor advisees are strongly encouraged to regularly attend the Socratic Society meetings (see Opportunities below), and are encouraged to attend the annual Illinois Philosophical Association meeting (see below).

Telos:

- A student of philosophy should strive to see how their work in their courses contribute to the general aims of Western analytic philosophy, and should consider how these goals fit in with their own.
- A student of philosophy should pursue their own self-improvement through their study of philosophy, but should also pursue the improvement of their community.
- The advisor will be available for regular discussions of the student's evolving vision and goals.
- The advisor aims to help the student take personal ownership of their scholarly career, and to help the student use their academic discipline and skills in the pursuit of eudaimonia.

Helpful Scholarly and Developmental Resources:

- PhilPapers: <https://philpapers.org/>
 - This database provides up-to-date bibliographical information for scholarly publications in philosophy, and very helpfully cross-lists entries by citation networks.
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://plato.stanford.edu/>
 - The leading experts in the relevant subjects continually update this peer-reviewed reference source; it is widely considered the premier source for scholarly research in professional academic philosophy.
- American Philosophical Association Resources for Undergraduate Philosophy Students: https://www.apaonline.org/page/undergrad_resources
 - The APA has many useful resources for professional development in philosophy.

Some Opportunities that are Great for Undergraduate Students:

- Socratic Society: <https://dekecainasgould.com/public-philosophy-community-events/>
 - Our long-running official club, which meets weekly to discuss scholarly topics of the students' choice.
- Illinois Philosophical Association: <https://illinoisphilosophicalassociation.wordpress.com/>
 - This regional organization welcomes undergraduate participation in our annual meetings (attendance for undergraduate students is free), and hosts a yearly undergraduate essay prize competition for students in IL.
- Undergraduate Conferences: <https://philosophy.wfu.edu/resources/undergraduate-conferences-and-journals/>

- My advisees have presented at the Midsouth and Western Kentucky conferences in years past, and reported to me that the experience was personally significant to them.
- Undergraduate Journals: <https://hub.williams.edu/philosophy/undergraduate-journals/>
 - Some students might want to consider publishing their work in one of these journals. Some of my students have served as referees or board members for some of these journals.
- Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy:
<https://www.colorado.edu/philosophy/events/summer-seminar>
 - A student recently participated in this long-running yearly summer seminar, and reported that it was a great experience. If I knew about this when I was an undergraduate (it began around the time I was a senior, if you can believe that), I would have certainly submitted an application for this myself.