Philosophy poses questions about human endeavors and examines our basic assumptions about everything we think we know. Our program takes on challenging issues that sometimes defy resolution and trains the brain to think in a rigorous and analytical way about all the possible answers and what's at stake. Here, you'll learn two types of critical thinking: first, a method for rigorous analysis of arguments; and second, a habit of asking penetrating questions about the hidden assumptions of any position, ideology or practice. You will develop your capacities to conceive of alternative assumptions, evaluate which ones are best and determine where they lead.

The College of Liberal Arts Advantage: More Than a Major

When you study Philosophy at the University of Minnesota, you gain the added advantage of a College of Liberal Arts education. At CLA, the liberal arts mean you get more than just a degree in one major or another; it means you will be exposed to different areas of study, to different ways of thinking and learning. In fact, the liberal arts teach you how to learn—how to ask the right questions, how to problem solve, and how to innovate. The liberal arts prepare students for the complexities of our world, because here at CLA you will study not just, say, politics or art but also where politics and art intersect, where science and ethics intersect, where economics and the environment intersect.
Meet Our Students

Maddy Glueck finds her studies in sociology and philosophy to be complementary. Her research assistantship over the summer gave her the opportunity to apply the reading, writing, and critical thinking skills she developed in both disciplines towards a positive end. Though unsure of her future plans, her studies have provided her with a readiness that is, as she puts it, “good for life in general,” wherever it might lead her.

Read more about Maddy's story, and learn more about our undergraduate program.

Student Experiences

Internships: Gain Valuable Experience in the Twin Cities and Beyond

Did you know? CLA Career Services has its very own internship reflection course! Students taking an internship can use this course to reflect on ways that their work experience is preparing them for successful careers - and receive credit for the work.

Learning Abroad in Philosophy: Prepare to Lead in a Global Economy
“Abandoning the familiar in order to travel and experience different places, people, languages, and cultures at its best fosters one's abilities to understand, analyze, and assess complex phenomena—all skills that serve the student of philosophy well. Study abroad is for the student today what the Grand Tour was for such great minds as Boswell, Goethe, and James.”
—Michelle Mason, Professor, Department of Philosophy

Learn more about study abroad for Philosophy majors.

Undergraduate Research: Turn Curiosity into New Knowledge

We encourage you to apply for the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). This program supports research projects dedicated to fulfilling the U of M’s commitment to research and expanding the store of human knowledge and expression. If you successfully apply, you will receive a stipend to support your research and you will also have the opportunity to present your research at various university symposia.

If you earn a UROP, you will be mentored by one of nearly 3,000 diverse faculty members and you will meet other students who share a passion for discovery about the human condition. The UROP can be used to help you achieve practical goals like your senior capstone project or put you on a path to a career.

If you desire to pursue a program with UROP, please consult our undergraduate advisor, Peter Harle, or visit the Office of Undergraduate Research for more information.

Student Organizations: Find Friends and Grow as a Leader

• Philosophy Club

Meet Our Faculty
Philosophy Professor Jessica Gordon-Roth analyzes the work of 17th-century philosopher Anne Finch Conway, overlooked in part because of her gender. How does her perspective differ from other major thinkers of the time period, like Hobbes and Descartes?

Read more about Professor Gordon-Roth's work.

Meet Our Alumni

Research has shown that year after year, philosophy is one of the best majors for admission to law school. Just ask graduating senior Jordan Kleist, who will be heading to one of the most prestigious law schools in the country this fall.

Read more about Jordan's story.

CLA Graduates: Successful Careers and Purposeful Lives

CLA graduates succeed in many different careers — law, health care, medicine, business, government, teaching, advertising, arts and entertainment, international relations, and more — precisely because they understand how to navigate a
complex and interconnected world. As our alumni explain below, “Being a good employee means being curious, and continuing to evolve, and learn, and educate yourself, and I can think of no stronger foundation for doing that than a liberal arts education.

“An education in the liberal arts is a springboard to lifelong career success”  
-- Dean John Coleman

You might also explore

Child Psychology  
Global Studies  
History  
Political Science  
Psychology

Associated Careers

Economists; Government Lawyers; Mathematicians; News Analysts, Reporters, and Correspondents; Postsecondary Teachers; Public Interest Advocates

Admission Information
FRESHMAN: Admission information

TRANSFER STUDENTS: Requirements for the College of Liberal Arts

• Did you know? CLA Transfer Advising has created an official "transfer guide" for a number of degree programs, including Philosophy, to help you determine which credits will transfer, and how.

Beyond admission, if you have questions about transferring, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has transfer advisors to help. Please feel free to contact them about any of the topics below:

• Course plans before transferring
• Estimated time to graduation
• Career preparation in CLA
• Getting ready for orientation, if admitted
• Connecting with major/minor departments