

# Philosophy & Religion Program

## Purpose Statement

The Philosophy and Religion department offers courses designed to help students critically reflect upon religious and philosophical traditions that for millennia have deeply shaped how human beings have understood their lives as a whole in relationship to all that exists. In so doing, students will critically consider their own worldview, while at the same time understanding more deeply and with greater empathy the worldviews of others. Travel courses offered through the program superbly complement the rest of the curriculum for this purpose. The practical benefits of the major are many. It provides excellent background for professions such as business, education, social work, and humanitarian assistance – to name just a few – that require understanding and empathy across widely diverse cultures. The major develops critical thinking skills essential to success in these and other professions, especially law. The major is one of the two recommended at McPherson College for the pre-law student. In addition, given the possibility the major offers for focusing specifically on the Christian tradition, it can assist students who seek to understand their chosen profession, whatever it may be, as Christian ministry, or who want preparation for entering seminary upon graduation. Whatever their career path, students will find their study of philosophy and religion empowering them to live with a deeper sense of purpose, a surer sense of their vocation, and greater appreciation for values such as peacemaking, stewardship, and service that contribute to the well-being of the world.

The Department of Philosophy and Religion achieves its purpose when its graduates:

- demonstrate an understanding of the world's major religious traditions and the diverse ways each is interpreted, with a special emphasis on how these traditions help shape both the human experience of the world around us and our response to it;
- demonstrate the ability to critically engage the western philosophical tradition as it addresses fundamental questions about the nature of reality, the meaning of our experience, and the purpose of life;
- demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and improve their own thinking;
- demonstrate the ability to bring the study of religion and philosophy to bear on their quest to understand the meaning and purpose of their own lives.

## Philosophy/Religion Major

### Requirements (All courses are 3 hours unless otherwise specified)

#### Core Courses (18 hours):

**G-PR 106L** Spiritual Pathways: Transformation, Compassion, and Vocation

**G-PR 107** Critical Thinking

**G-PR 201** Introduction to Philosophy

**G-PR 306** World Religions

**PR 375** Junior Seminar (1 hour)

**PR 431** Topics in Religious or Theological Studies OR

**PR 432** Topics in Philosophy

**PR 475** Senior Seminar/Thesis (2 hours)

#### Electives (12 hours from the following):

**G-PR 101** Old Testament-Hebrew Bible: God and People in Ancient Israel

**G-PR 102** Jesus: New Testament Foundations

**G-PR 104 or G-PR 104L** Ethics (3 hours if G-PR 104; 4 hours if G-PR 104L)

**G-PR 202** Christian Traditions

**G-PR 203** Science and Religion

**G-PR 204** Peacemaking: Religious Perspectives

**G-PR 206** Religion and Environmental Stewardship

**PR 303** Readings in Theology/Philosophy (2 or 3 hours, depending on the semester)

**G-PR 304** The Church of the Brethren and Beyond: The Christian Church Serves Our World

**PR411** Travel (3 or 4 hours, depending on the semester)

#### Supporting Courses (12 hours from the following)\*:

**G-ET 201** Social Entrepreneurship

**EN 230** Linguistics (2 hours)

**G-CM 130** Interpersonal Communication

**G-CM 221** Intercultural Communication

**CM 240** Gender Communication

**CM 325** Conflict Communication

**BI 404** Biomedical Ethics (2 hours)

**NS 404** Environmental Ethics (2 hours)

**G-HI/PS 101** Historical Introduction to Politics  
**G-PS 215** Global Peace Studies  
**HI 313** Medieval Europe  
**PY/SO 210** Human Sexuality  
**PY/SO 308** Counseling  
**PY 405** Personality Theories

\*Note: alternative courses will be considered and can be approved by the department chair on a case-by-case basis.

## Philosophy/Religion Minor

### Requirements (all courses are 3 hours)

**G-PR 106L** Spiritual Pathways: Transformation, Compassion, and Vocation  
**G-PR 201** Introduction to Philosophy  
plus a minimum of 12 more hours of any courses with a PR prefix.

## Peace Studies Minor

The Department also coordinates and provides oversight for a minor in Peace Studies. Peace Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that seeks understanding of the causes of human conflict and violence. It then strives to develop methods for resolving conflicts nonviolently and for promoting peace through justice at all levels of human society and in human relationships with the natural environment. The minor can complement any number of majors, for example, Political Science, History, or Environmental Stewardship, especially for those students seeking to couple their major field and professional training to values of social justice and peacemaking.

Students who complete a minor in Peace Studies will be able to:

- demonstrate that they understand some of the most important causes and consequences of interpersonal, societal, and international conflict and violence; and
- demonstrate that they understand a variety of methods for conflict resolution and peacemaking that address these causes and promote the well-being of human communities and of the planet on which we live.

### Requirements (all courses are 3 hours unless otherwise specified)

#### Core Courses (12 hours)

**G-PS 125** International Relations  
**G-PR 204** Peacemaking: Religious Perspectives  
**G-PS 215** Global Peace Studies  
**CM 325** Conflict Communication

#### Electives (at least 6 hours from the following)

**G-PR 104** Ethics  
**G-NS 141** Environmental Science (4 hours)  
**G-ET 201** Social Entrepreneurship  
**G-SO 202** Minorities in the US (3-4 hours)  
**G-PR 206** Religion and Environmental Stewardship  
**SO 206** Social Problems (3-4 hours)  
**G-CM 221** Intercultural Communication  
**CM 240** Gender Communication  
**NS 404** Environmental Ethics (2 hours)