

Department of Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy offers a variety of introductory courses and a full program of advanced offerings covering all of the major subject areas of philosophy. In addition, faculty members in the department direct individual private reading projects and other forms of independent study. The department has a major, a minor, and a Senior Honors Program. Courses in philosophy develop skills essential to all intellectual activity, such as isolating the evidence that supports a position, evaluating the strength of evidence, seeking out alternative explanations, and presenting complicated ideas clearly.

Philosophy graduates typically go on to graduate study, to law or other professional schools, or to careers in government, social service, business, or industry. Philosophy majors from Oberlin have pursued careers in philosophy at some of the best graduate schools in the country. Others have pursued graduate study in other fields, such as environmental studies, computer science, and religious studies, and several have pursued law degrees.

The department's faculty members all have strong academic credentials, and are engaged in professional activity in philosophy as well as in teaching. Oberlin has a strong philosophy collection in its library, which also maintains all major philosophy journals.

There is a rich variety of philosophical activities to engage interested students. Visiting philosophers speak on the campus each year. The department sponsors the Dahl Essay Contest, to honor the best undergraduate essay in philosophy, and the Rhoden Essay Contest, to honor an excellent essay in ethics, medical ethics, or jurisprudence. In addition, the department sponsors the Oberlin Colloquium in Philosophy. This colloquium involves a full spring weekend of symposia involving speakers and commentators from other colleges and universities. They present their new work to an audience of members of the Oberlin Community and invited philosophers from this country and abroad. The next Colloquium will be the thirty-seventh in the series. The Proceedings have just been published for the fifteenth time.

Students majoring or minoring in philosophy are active in the department's affairs through an elected major's committee.

Further detailed information about the department, its faculty members, and its course offerings is provided in the Catalog and on the department website, at www.oberlin.edu/philosoph/. If you have questions, please contact the department Chairperson. Should you be on the Oberlin campus, please visit the department's offices on the first floor of the King Building. We will be happy to talk with you.

Department of Philosophy Faculty

JAMES BELL

Visiting Assistant Professor

B.A. University of Virginia, 1992

Ph.D. University of Michigan, 2002

He teaches courses in Epistemology and Philosophy of Literature. His research interests include Epistemology, Moral Psychology, and Philosophy of Literature.

DORIT A. GANSON

Assistant Professor

B.A. Princeton University, 1989

Ph.D. Cornell University, 1999

She teaches courses in Epistemology, Philosophy of Science, and Philosophy of Language. Her research interests are in Philosophy of Science and Epistemology.

TODD S. GANSON

Assistant Professor

B.A. University of California at Davis, 1992

Ph.D. Cornell University, 1998

He teaches courses in Ancient Philosophy and Modern Philosophy. His research interests are in Ancient Philosophy, Modern Philosophy, and Philosophy of Psychology.

TIMOTHY HALL

Assistant Professor

B.A. University of California, Berkeley, 1992

Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles 2003

He teaches courses in Ethics, Medical Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy, and Environmental Ethics. His research interests are in Normative Medical Ethics and Political Philosophy.

KATHERINE J. M. THOMSON-JONES

Visiting Assistant Professor

Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow

B.A. Queen's University, 1997

Ph.D. University of Toronto, 2003

She teaches courses in aesthetics, philosophy of film, philosophy of music, and value theory. Her research interests are in aesthetics, ethics, and emotion theory.

MARTIN THOMSON-JONES

Associate Professor and Chair

B.A. Oxford University, 1986

Ph.D. Stanford University, 1991

He teaches courses in Logic, Philosophy of Science, and Metaphysics. His research interests are in Philosophy of Science and Metaphysics.

ALFRED F. MacKAY

Professor

B.A. Davidson College, 1960

Ph.D. University of North Carolina, 1967

He teaches courses in Ethics and Modern Philosophy. His research interests are in the areas of Ethics, Philosophy of Economics, Philosophy of Language, and Modern Philosophy.

PETER K. McINERNEY

Professor

B.A. Yale University, 1971

Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin, 1976

He teaches courses in 19th Century Philosophy, 20th Century Continental Philosophy, Existentialism, and Philosophy of Mind. His current research is in the areas of Phenomenology, Existentialism, Cognitive Science, and Philosophy of Mind. His recent publications concern the nature of persons and time.

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