Philosophy is the critical study of the intellectual foundations of virtually every area of human thought and action. Philosophers examine the nature of moral values, scientific explanations, religious beliefs, and much more. Such study will develop students’ abilities to read critically, write logically, analyze divergent viewpoints, and give good reasons for their own beliefs.

Programs of Study
The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies offers a major in Philosophy with two options: a general option and a Pre-Law option. It also offers a Philosophy minor.

The general Philosophy option emphasizes the development of skills in logical reasoning, argumentation, and linguistic analysis. Students improve their ability to express their position clearly and precisely whether orally or in writing. Students learn to apply critical reasoning to topics such as the existence of God, moral principles, the nature of the mind, knowledge, free will, the scientific method, and the good life, while becoming acquainted with both historical and contemporary sources.

The Pre-Law option is designed for those students intending to go to law school. Many of the courses use the Socratic method and are concerned with ethics, justice, principles of sound reasoning, and legal history and practice. Reasoning by cases, hypothetical situations, and philosophical problem-solving skills are fostered in all courses. Ultimately, the Pre-Law option is designed to sharpen the ability to reason, to respond capably to opposing arguments, and to put one's point clearly and precisely both orally and in writing.

Faculty
All Philosophy faculty members have a Ph.D. in Philosophy. Students taking courses at any level, introductory or advanced, can be assured they are taught by faculty with excellent graduate training and earned doctorates who have a strong commitment to undergraduate teaching and are engaged scholars in their field.

Scholarships
The Mary Olive Woods (MOW) Trust provides funding for student scholarships up to $6,000 for majors. The department annually awards around $10,000 in scholarships to deserving undergraduates. A departmental scholarship is also available to an outstanding Philosophy major who is a graduating senior. For more information about scholarships, please see wiu.edu/prs or wiu.edu/Scholarship.

Honors in Philosophy
To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must have an ACT composite score of at least 28 OR have a 26 or 27 composite ACT and be in the top 15% of their graduating class OR have an ACT composite score of at least 24 and be in the top 10% of their high school graduating class. A comparable SAT score is acceptable. Transfer and current WIU students who wish to join the Honors College (including the Quad Cities Honors Program) must have a 3.4 grade point average on a 4.0 scale based on 12 semester hours or more. Honors credit is given for honors coursework completed at other accredited institutions. To find out more, visit wiu.edu/Honors.
General honors seminars in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences provide students with the opportunity to explore key academic issues with distinguished faculty members. Students completing the Philosophy major with honors have the opportunity to take general honors courses, Philosophy courses for honors credit, and the Bachelor’s Thesis in Philosophy. For the thesis project, students work under the supervision of a faculty member, selecting and researching a topic, writing and revising the thesis paper, and conducting an oral defense of it.

Student Activities
The student organization for Philosophy majors and other students interested in philosophy, the Student Philosophical Association, meets biweekly throughout the academic year. Meetings are organized around topics of interest to students and include presentations by students and faculty members, discussions of films, and panel discussions.

Special Opportunities
The department’s strong commitment to undergraduate teaching and student learning is evidenced by keeping classes at a size small enough that students can participate actively in class discussions and faculty can get to know students on an individual basis. Faculty members are accessible to students beyond the classroom, during office hours, and in informal settings such as student organization meetings and other social functions. Highly personalized advising and career counseling services are provided by the department to allow students to make the most of their education at Western.

The Mary Olive Woods Trust provides funding for an annual lecture series in which a nationally renowned scholar is brought in for a two-day visit, which includes a lecture and more informal meetings with students and faculty. The department also brings in other distinguished speakers through its Outside Speakers Series.

After College
Extensive study in philosophy can provide an excellent background for a variety of careers. Our graduates work in many fields, including business, government, academia, and technical writing. Many of our students go on to do graduate work in philosophy, and others seek professional degrees in law (Philosophy is considered to be one of the best majors for Pre-Law students), the ministry, business and public administration, counseling, and other areas.

For More Information
See the department’s website at wiu.edu/philosophy. The department office is in Morgan Hall 456, and visitors are welcome to stop by. An appointment to meet with the department chair to discuss programs can be arranged by e-mailing prs@wiu.edu or by calling (309) 298-1057.

For Your General Outlook
Both options in the Philosophy major participate in Western’s GradTrac program so that students can finish their undergraduate degree in a timely manner—four years or less. Students are encouraged to complete their General Education requirements, including communication skills courses, during their freshman and sophomore years. They are also expected to take several introductory philosophy courses, in particular, Logic and Reasoning, during that time as well. The required History of Philosophy courses (Ancient and Modern) as well as the Philosophical Writing course should be taken in the junior year. In the junior and senior years, students will also take other upper-level Philosophy courses based on their interests and goals. An early choice of a suitable minor, preferably by the end of the sophomore year, is strongly advised.

University Libraries
University Libraries consists of the Leslie F. Malpass Library, which is the main branch, and four other branches: the Physical Sciences Library, the Music Library, the Curriculum Library, and the Quad Cities Library. We offer students access to a variety of resources in print and online. Research assistance is available in person at the Reference Desk and via instant messaging. Check out our website for hours, events, and services available: wiu.edu/libraries.

Campus Visits
The Admissions Reception Center (Sherman Hall 115) is open most weekdays from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM when the University is in session. Group information sessions are available on Mondays and Fridays at 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM, and individual appointments can be made on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Campus tours are conducted at 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Appointments with advisers, faculty, or a financial aid adviser may be arranged separately during the week. The Admissions Reception Center is open from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM most Saturdays when the University is in session. A group information session is available at 10:00 AM, and a campus tour is conducted at 11:00 AM. You may schedule your visit or tour online at wiu.edu/admissions by selecting “Visit Campus.” You may also schedule a visit, tour, or individual appointment by calling toll free (877) PICKWIU (742-5948) or (309) 298-3157, or by e-mailing admissions@wiu.edu.