Philosophy asks the big questions: about the possibility of knowledge, the structure of reality, the basis of morality, and the nature of the mind. These questions in turn yield more specific but still abstract questions about the world and our relationship to it. A student majoring in philosophy at the University of Chicago chooses among courses on freedom of the will, the nature of rationality, the interpretation of quantum mechanics, medical ethics, the structure of visual perception, the morality of taxation, 19th-century views of religious knowledge, the possibility of artificial intelligence, ancient and medieval conceptions of logic, the relationship between emotion and reason, linguistic meaning, and many other topics.

Philosophical questions can be addressed in a number of different ways. Philosophy departments tend to focus on one or another of various approaches: some on historical figures, some on contemporary Continental philosophy, and some on Anglo-American “analytic” philosophy. In the UChicago Department of Philosophy, we pride ourselves on embracing all of these approaches and on offering students the opportunity to do rigorous philosophical work across a diverse spectrum of topics and methods. We work hard to cultivate a vision of philosophy as a single subject—albeit a rich and multifaceted one—and an ethos of intellectual community according to which anyone studying philosophy ought to be able to talk productively to anyone else, regardless of their differing interests.

For more information, visit collegeadmissions.uchicago.edu
Curriculum
The philosophy major is one of the largest in the Humanities Collegiate Division and one of the fastest growing at the College; the number of majors has increased by more than 50 percent in the last five years. Students are drawn by the depth and quality of the course offerings, and by the choice of several well-structured but flexible program options.

The major offers both a standard track and an intensive track. Students in both tracks typically begin with a series of courses on the history of philosophy and a course on symbolic logic. They are then free to choose their remaining departmental courses, subject to the requirement that they not limit all of their courses to one area.

In addition to these basic requirements, students in the intensive track take a series of special small-group courses designed to approximate the character of graduate-school seminars. The intensive track culminates in a senior thesis written over the course of the student's fourth year, under the supervision of a faculty adviser and with the help of peer review workshops composed of other students writing essays. Standard track majors may also apply to write a senior thesis. Recent theses have been on Aristotle's views on matter and change, the meaning of proper names in fictional discourse, Nietzsche's critique of ethics, objectivity in morality, the nature of the good life, and the existence of general norms of assertion.

We also offer a philosophy and allied fields option, in which students, with the help of a faculty sponsor, design a curriculum that spans disciplinary boundaries between philosophy and other areas. Past programs of study have included philosophy and physics, philosophy and biology, philosophy and English, and philosophy and history.

Faculty
Our world-class faculty has very broad interests in both teaching and research. We are recognized as among the very strongest departments in a wide range of areas, from ancient Greek to contemporary European philosophy. Faculty members have won a wide array of prestigious awards, including Distinguished Achievement Awards from the Mellon Foundation, Guggenheim fellowships, and the Harvard Centennial Medal.

Student Organizations
Our students are enthusiastic and committed. We have an active Undergraduate Philosophy Group, which meets regularly to discuss philosophy over coffee and puts on a conference of undergraduate work every year that draws submissions from colleges throughout the Midwest. UChicago is likewise home to the Women in Philosophy organization, as well as a few special interest clubs pertaining to particular philosophical approaches. In addition, the Department of Philosophy is always looking for ways for faculty to connect with students outside the classroom and hosts faculty-led lunches, movie nights, and other events throughout the year.

Grant and Research Opportunities
Philosophy majors have had success in securing a wide range of summer and postgraduate grants. The Department of Philosophy offers Dunn research grants for summer-time work on scholarly philosophical projects and PRISM grants for a wide range of research projects. Philosophy students may also compete for Metcalf fellowships for summer internships and other grants funded by the College.

Philosophy students are competitive applicants in various prestigious national and international fellowship competitions, and have been recent recipients of the Fulbright fellowship, the Beinecke scholarship, and the DAAD grant.

Our faculty members have strong academic connections internationally to universities in France, Germany, Italy, Northern Europe, and elsewhere. Many of our undergraduates spend part or all of their third year abroad, at the University of Chicago Center in Paris or similar institutions.

After Graduation
Many of our students go on to graduate work in philosophy, other areas of the humanities, and law. Our placement rate has been extremely high in recent years, with students getting into a range of the best programs in the country.

Philosophy cultivates skills in logical reasoning, persuasive argument, and clear writing, and is thus a good starting point for careers in which those skills are important. Our students go on to work in a range of positions in business, nonprofit organizations, and education.