

STUDYING PHILOSOPHY AT USF

Why the philosophy major is the best choice for students planning on a career in law

There can be little doubt that the philosophy major provides the best preparation for an education and career in the law.

First, philosophy consistently ranks first among pre-law majors in average LSAT score, surely the most important criterion for admission to law schools.

Second, a training in philosophy develops just the sorts of skills that law students and practicing lawyers need: skills at analyzing complex situations, drawing distinctions, formulating definitions, interpreting and comprehending abstract concepts and texts, evaluating the probity of evidence and arguments, and writing and speaking with clarity, focus, and argumentative rigor. And philosophy students receive a broad and in-depth exposure to the fields of study that serve as the foundations of law: ethics, social and political philosophy, logic, justice and human rights, and epistemology.

This is why the *Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools*, Law School Admission Council says, “While no single curricular path is the ideal preparation for law school, you should choose courses that sharpen analytical reasoning and writing skills. Law schools prefer students who can think, read, and write well, and who have some understanding of what shapes human experience.”

And the Bar Association says, “Contrary to popular belief, law schools do not favor political science, criminal justice, and government majors over others. Choose major and elective courses that you will genuinely enjoy, instead of those you were told were required for pre-law students. You are likely to get better grades in a field you find interesting. And even if you don’t, law schools will respect your pursuit of subjects you find challenging. This is especially true if the courses you take are known to be more difficult, such as philosophy, engineering, and science. Also, look for courses that will strengthen the skills you need in law school. Classes that stress research and writing are excellent preparation for law school, as are courses that teach reasoning and analytical skills.” (American Bar Association Council on Legal Education Opportunity)

The following courses at USF are particularly recommended for students considering a career in law:

- PHI 1103—Critical Thinking
- PHI 1401—Science and Society
- PHI 1600—Introduction to Ethics
- PHI 2101—Logic
- PHI 2630—Contemporary Moral Issues
- PHI 2631—Ethics and Business

- PHM 3100—Social Philosophy
- PHM 3400—Introduction to Philosophy of Law
- PHI 3404—Philosophy of Science
- PHI 3633—Biomedical Ethics
- PHI 3636—Professional Ethics
- PHI 3640—Environmental Ethics
- PHM 4331—Modern Political Philosophy
- PHM 4340—Contemporary Political Philosophy
- PHI 4632—Feminist Ethics

For further information, visit us online at <http://philosophy.usf.edu>. You may contact our Undergraduate Mentor, Douglas Jesseph at Jesseph@usf.edu, or our Undergraduate Advisor, Dr. Christianne Rinck at crinck@usf.edu. For specific questions concerning the relationships between philosophy and the law, contact Prof. Richard Manning, J.D., Ph.D, at rmanning@cas.usf.edu. We welcome enquiries from both prospective USF degree-seeking students and dual enrollment students!

