

Ethics and Society Major

Program of Study Type

Major

Students who major in Ethics and Society explore philosophy through the lens of selected ethical and social issues. Through exposure to a variety of historical periods, areas of the world, and particular topics, students will develop their ability to engage in ethical theorizing. Topics studied in this major may include climate change ethics, criminal justice and punishment, biomedical ethics, animal rights, racial and gender justice, and various other ways that ethical theorizing can apply to urgent contemporary problems and fundamental issues of both personal and social significance.

Learning Goals

Upon graduation, a student will be able to:

- Critically engage with the complexities of moral questions.
- Present clearly in writing individually-developed insights on ethical issues.
- Orally present, with clarity and rigor, individually-developed insights on ethical issues.
- Understand the relevance of the history of philosophy for contemporary ethical and social issues.
- Understand how ethical and social issues fit within the broader context of philosophical inquiry.

Requirements

- **34 Credits (38 if pursuing honors)**
- **Required Courses**
 - Philosophy 127 and 425
 - At least one course numbered Philosophy 201-209
- **Electives**
 - Three courses from the Ethics and Society (E&S) category, including:
 - At least one course also listed in the Philosophy and Contemporary Issues (PCI) category
 - At least two courses at the 300-level or above
 - Three additional elective courses in Philosophy, of which at least one is at the 300-level or above
 - These courses may be listed under E&S, but need not be.
- **Notes**
 - With approval of the Philosophy Department, a student may replace one of the additional Philosophy electives with a related course from another department.
 - Philosophy 127 should be completed by the end of the student's sixth semester.
 - No courses may be taken P-D-F.
 - Students may not combine this major with a major or minor in Philosophy.
 - No more than 11 transfer credits may count toward the major.
- **Senior Requirements**
 - Rewriting of a substantive paper from an E&S course
 - A collaborative project that culminates in a public presentation or display
 - Oral exam focused on the revised seminar paper and the student's work on the collective project
- **Honors**
 - Students submit an Honors in Major Study Application to the department.
 - Students must submit a proposal for their thesis or project.
 - The proposal must be submitted within the first six weeks of the two-semester period in which the student is eligible.
 - Accumulated at least 87 credits
 - Completed two semesters of residency at Whitman
 - Major GPA of at least 3.500
 - Complete a written thesis or research project prepared exclusively for the satisfaction of this program.
 - Earn a grade of at least A- on the honors thesis or project and the honors thesis course.

- Pass the senior assessment with distinction.
- The department will submit the honors applications to the Registrar's Office for students pursuing honors by the specified deadline.
- The department will submit "Senior Assessment/Major Study Certificate" to the Registrar's Office no later than Reading Day.
- **The Honors Thesis (eight credits total)**
 - Majors interested in writing an honors thesis must have a major GPA of at least 3.500, must complete at least 36 credits of coursework in Philosophy, and complete the following:
 - Submit a proposal to the department two weeks before the end of the spring semester of their junior year.
 - Get consent from a member of the department based on departmental approval of the proposal to conduct an independent study in the fall semester of their senior year.
 - Upon completion of a successful independent study, submit a new honors thesis proposal for departmental approval by the beginning of the last week of classes in the fall semester of their senior year. If approved, then write the honors thesis in the spring semester of their senior year, due by the end of the first week in April.
 - Successfully complete a public oral examination of the honors thesis before the end of the third week of April.

Electives

Item #	Title	Credits
	Ethics and Society (E&S) Electives	
	Philosophy and Contemporary Issues (PCI) Electives	
	Texts and Figures (T&F) Electives	
	Philosophical Topics (PT) Electives	
	Total Credits	34-38