

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY**

**MASTER OF ARTS IN PHILOSOPHY**

**I. DESCRIPTION**

The MA PROGRAM primarily aims to nurture the philosophical interests and competence of each student, and to offer a responsive program of supervised research and instruction dealing with philosophers and philosophical issues both from historical and contextual perspectives.

It is designed to be completed in two (2) school years with thirty-three (33) units of academic course works and six (6) units of thesis writing.

**II. OBJECTIVES**

The Program pursues a research track. It is patterned after the programs of some leading western universities and departs from the regular classroom meetings to give the students more time to devote and research on their assigned or chosen course topics.

It likewise intends to address the predicament of working students who are unable to pursue their philosophical interests and graduate education due to distance, or the nature of their work assignments. It allows the teacher and students flexibility of meetings and to explore modes of communications best suited to the student's situation.

**III. POLICY ON ADMISSION**

The Program is best suited for applicants with Philosophy undergraduate degree, but it accommodates applicants from other related fields after completing eighteen (18) units of basic Philosophy courses in the Department's undergraduate program. The said courses shall be determined by the Chairperson in accordance with the Department policy.

Upon application for admission, the student is expected to already have a tentative or proposed thesis topic to pursue under any of the following schools: Process Philosophy, Critical Philosophy, Existentialism, Bioethics Law, Technology, Culture, Education and Natural Theology.

**IV. ADVISOR**

Upon enrolment, a student will be assigned an official advisor to guide and supervise his performance and progress in the program, which advisorship may be rendered for free, at the option of the adviser.

This advisor may continue to be the student's thesis advisor if said advisor's expertise coincides with the approved thesis topic of the student.

## **V. POLICY ON GRADES**

The student must maintain a grade not below 3.0 for each subject, otherwise he/she will be required to retake said subject in order to comply with the stated requirement.

The department maintains a 5-strike rule. If the student gets an accumulated five (5) subjects with below 3.0 grades, he/she will be advised not to continue with the program.

## **VI. ORAL TOPICAL EXAMINATION**

At least two weeks before the end of the semester, an oral topical examination will be scheduled for each subject wherein the student will present his finished research before the class upon prior clearance by the subject teacher. This oral examination may be attended by other invited members of the faculty.

The student's final grade for the subject will be based on his written research output and oral presentation of the same.

## **VII. DUE DATE OF RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS**

All research assignments must be finished and submitted to the subject teacher before the scheduled oral topical examination. No student will be allowed to orally present a research paper without prior clearance from said teacher.

## **VIII. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS**

When the course requirements have all been satisfied, the student will then arrange with the Department Chairperson for his/her comprehensive examination on at least five (5) designated subjects, covering the main and other related topics of his researches on said subjects.

An over-all average rating of at least 3.0 is required in order that the student may qualify to enroll for Thesis Proposal, otherwise he has to schedule a retake of all designated subjects to comply with the 3.0 requirement.

## **IX. THESIS PROPOSAL**

When the immediately above requirement has been complied with, the student must then enroll in the Thesis Proposal subject and submit to the Department Chairperson a thesis proposal, following the prescribed format, and written in consultation with his/her chosen advisor. A proposal hearing will then be arranged by the Department

Chairperson duly attended by the thesis panel in accordance with the policy of the university.

If the proposal needs to be revised, the revised version should first be submitted to the panel members who may then individually give the approval without need of formal meeting for the purpose, before the student goes on with the research proper.

The thesis proposal should be a clear statement on the basic subject of the research, the specific problems or issues to focus on, the materials or means to employ, and the general direction of the research. It should likewise guide the panel members whether the topic is such that it can be successfully completed within a given time frame.

The approved thesis proposal may be understood as a contract committing the student to pursue the topic and the department to accept of the topic as a legitimate area of inquiry.

## **X. THESIS DEFENSE**

The completed thesis will be preliminarily appraised by the thesis adviser. If he finds the thesis acceptable both in form and content, an oral examination will then be held, in which said thesis must be adequately defended before the same panel members who heard the thesis proposal, except in a situation where a replacement has to be effected.

The thesis defense aims to measure the student's skill in discussing the issues traversed in the thesis, and his ability to meet friendly but searching criticisms on his/her work.

## **XI. COURSE OFFERINGS**

Philo 200	Political Philosophy
Philo 201	Philosophy of Religion
Philo 202	Filipino Philosophy
Philo 203	Philosophy of Education
Philo 204	Metaphysics
Philo 205	Philosophy of Technology
Philo 206	Oriental Philosophy
Philo 207	Existentialism
Philo 208	Philosophy of Science
Philo 209	Philosophy of History
Philo 210	Pragmatism
Philo 211	Philosophy of Law
Philo 212	Social Philosophy
Philo 213	Hermeneutics
Philo 214	Feminism
Philo 215	Epistemology
Philo 216	Communism

Philo 217	Philosophy of Language
Philo 218	Rationalism
Philo 219	Empiricism
Philo 220	Idealism
Philo 221	Realism
Philo 222	Logical Positivism
Philo 223	Critical Theory
Philo 224	Process Philosophy
Philo 225	Philosophical Research
Philo 226	Seminar
Philo 227	Thesis Proposal/Writing

## **XII. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Philo 200      Political Philosophy**

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the problems and theories of political organization in the context of the social and intellectual climate of the period. Specifically, the pertinent works of the philosophers to be studied include: Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Sun Tzu, Rousseau, Mill and Marx.

### **Philo 201      Philosophy of Religion**

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the philosophical and metaphysical tenets of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism. The primary focus is the notion of an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good God, which is central to the predominant western and non-western monotheistic traditions. It also treats the various philosophical approaches to religious issues, arguments for and against the existence of God, the problem of evil, faith, revelation, mysticism, the Creation-Evolution debate, the attributes of God, miracles, and the relationship of religion to ethics.

### **Philo 202      Filipino Philosophy**

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the philosophical implications of the major ideas of Bonifacio, Rizal, Mabini, Quezon, Laurel, Recto, Constantino, and other Filipino nationalists as found in their various writings.

### **Philo 203      Philosophy of Education**

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the theories and principles of education from Plato to Dewey. It additionally tackles not only the question of who learns what within each theory, but also of how these philosophers saw the role of education in social evolution.

## Philo 204 Metaphysics

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the nature of metaphysical inquiry, of world views, and the categories and nature of reality. It is divided into two major concerns namely, Ontology, which deals with the question of how many fundamentally distinct sorts of entities compose the universe, and Metaphysics proper, which is concerned with describing the most general traits of reality.

## Philo 205 Philosophy of Technology

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the nature and dynamics of technology, with emphasis on its socio-economic, cultural, and political implications. The central purpose of this course is to explore the effects of modern technology on man and society. Technology in this study, therefore, is approached from a critical point of view, i.e., seeing how modern technology has shaped and reshaped the "social" vis-à-vis the economic, the political, and the cultural.

## Philo 206 Oriental Philosophy

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the major philosophies of the Eastern world. It treats selected topics from Indian, Chinese, and Japanese philosophies and examines the basic ideas that underlie the religious and moral viewpoints of these traditions.

## Philo 207 Existentialism

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the philosophical movement or tendency, emphasizing individual existence, freedom and choice, which influenced many diverse writers in the 19th and 20th centuries. Special attention is given to the existential and phenomenological movement in contemporary German and French philosophies.

## Philo 208 Philosophy of Science

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the nature of scientific explanation, the confirmation of scientific theories, theories of truth, and the distinction between science and metaphysics. Special topics in the philosophy of biology -- evolutionary vs teleological explanations, natural selection, natural kinds, random mutation, etc. -- will also be examined.

## Philo 209 Philosophy of History

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the historical (from 1800) and contemporary themes in the philosophy of history, a study in the interactions between philosophical and historical method. Themes include: historicism, historicity, universality and particularity, the debate over positivism, the historical nature

of concepts and meaning, time and tense, the temporality of experience, the nature of tradition and practice, memory and the writing of one's history (autobiography).

#### Philo 210     Pragmatism

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on American Pragmatism from its inception, in the writings of Peirce, to its maturity and later development in the writings of James and Dewey. It endeavors to penetrate into the essential characteristic of Peirce's original conception of American Pragmatism, which were derived within the scope of metaphysics. From this logical and metaphysical perspectives, Peirce's pragmatism will then be related to James's and Dewey's respective version, and of how these two latter philosophers applied pragmatism to other areas and to the issues of the time.

#### Philo 211     Philosophy of Law

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the nature of law, legal reasoning, and the relationship between law, morality and society. It is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the nature of law, the relationship between morality and law, and the relationship between the law and the state; the second part deals with the specific features of the law, including the limits on law set by proper liberty, the problem concerning legal procedure, and the issue of capital punishment in the context of philosophy of law.

#### Philo 212     Social Philosophy

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the problems about human and social relations: distributive justice, equality, social and economic institutions. Among the topics to focus on are elitism, communism, capitalism, socialism, the status of women, the nuclear family, racial and religious equality, public educational policy, war, pacifism and violence, crime and punishment.

#### Philo 213     Hermeneutics

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the nature of human understanding and the interpretation of written texts. Attention is centered on the understanding of meaning, translation, architectures for natural language understanding, and the methods suitable for scientific inquiry.

#### Philo 214     Feminism

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the claims of the feminists' movement. It is centered on the issues and the understanding what feminist theory and philosophy is, and what its motivations are. It analyzes the intellectual commitments underlying feminists concerns, focuses on the concern and

interests that unite and motivate feminist theory, and looks theories of gender differences and some of the various ways of looking at the female identity.

#### Philo 215 Epistemology

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the central issues in contemporary epistemology (the study of knowledge). The abilities to think, read, and write critically, to develop and defend arguments, and to appropriately justify one's views will be emphasized. Topics to be discussed include the analysis of knowledge, Scepticism, theories of epistemic justification, alternative approaches to traditional epistemology, and varieties of knowledge. It is also a study on the problems concerning the definition of knowledge and related concepts, the sources of and criteria of knowledge, the kinds of knowledge possible and the degree to which each is certain, the limits of knowledge, and the exact relation between the one who knows and the object known.

#### Philo 216 Communism

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on communism, which comprises communistic anarchism, socialism, and communism in the strict sense, primarily as a philosophical movement and as a social system. Centered attention is given to the pertinent works of Plato, More, Campanella, Fourier, Morris, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Zedong.

#### Philo 217 Philosophy of Language

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the concepts of meaning, truth, and belief, the relationship between language and the world, the use of words to talk about things, the relationship between the words man uses and the thoughts that man expresses. It will begin by investigating the work of Frege and Russell on the meaning of proper names. Other related topics in the course include: truth and meaning, and the implications of contemporary linguistics on the philosophy of language, the ontology of languages, the epistemology of language understanding and language learning, and the mental/psychological basis of linguistic understanding and use.

#### Philo 218 Rationalism

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the rationalist thought in early modern philosophy. The main focus will be on epistemological and metaphysical issues in the writings of Rene Descartes (1596-1650), G. W. Leibniz (1646-1716) and Baruch Spinoza. Topics to be examined include: Ideas and Knowledge, Mind and Body, God, Self-consciousness, Identity.

### Philo 219     Empiricism

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the philosophical problems, positions, and methodologies which were of central concern to the 17th and 18th philosophers of the British Isles. Locke, Berkeley, and Hume will be studied, and both the historical and contemporary importance of their views will be highlighted. In this course (as in the others), students should become familiar with the problems, positions, and methodologies of the philosophers studied. These courses deal with the interpretation texts; the balanced exposition and examination of philosophical problems, positions, and methodologies; and the philosophical criticism of doctrines and things commonly taken for granted. In addition to introducing students to the representative thinkers mentioned above, then, this course is intended to enhance the student's critical reading, writing, and speaking skills.

### Philo 220     Idealism

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research the philosophical notion of Idealism, a doctrine which holds that the ultimate nature of reality is based on ideas. Idealism as a philosophical movement is very important for the students of philosophy not only because it is one of the most exciting periods in the history of philosophy, but because most of the great thinkers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century like Husserl, Heidegger, Marcuse, Adorno, and others, and even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century like Habermas and Honneth, can be said as direct offshoots of the idealism of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and, most especially, Hegel. This course deals largely on German and British idealism.

### Philo 221     Realism

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the independence of existence from sense perception. Topics included are: the relationship between the object and the observer that accounts for the possibility of illusion, hallucination, and other perceptual errors, Naive realism, Moderate Realism, Platonic Forms or Universals, and Nominalism.

### Philo 222     Logical Positivism

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the system of philosophy based on experience and empirical knowledge of natural phenomena, in which metaphysics and theology are regarded as inadequate and imperfect systems of knowledge. The writings of the philosophers Wittgenstein, Russell, Carnap, and Moore will be primarily considered.

### Philo 223     Critical Theory

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on Critical Theory, originated by the early members of the Frankfurt School, which refers to a whole range of theory which takes a critical view of society and the human sciences. However, this



philosophical movement which has become a fashionable interest today is no longer exclusive to the Frankfurt people. Any philosophical approach which espouses the same purpose can be called "critical theory". Thus, most scholars in this field use the capitalized "Critical Theory" to refer to the Frankfurt School, while the lower case form "critical theory" is used to refer to such philosophical approach of the same purpose. In this course, the stress is on Critical Theory, which aims to expose the students to the works of Hegel, Marx, Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse, Habermas, Honneth, and other members of the Frankfurt School. "But inasmuch as the idea of "critique" was first popularized by Kant, the students will be exposed first to Kant's notion of critique before proceeding to Hegel."

#### Philo 224 Process Philosophy

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research on the integration and reconciliation of the diverse facets of human experience (i.e. ethical, religious, aesthetic, and scientific intuitions) into one coherent explanatory scheme. The most common applications of process thought are in the fields of philosophy and theology. However, process has also found a meaningful foothold in many other discussions, including ecology, economics, physics, biology, education, psychology, feminism, and cultural studies.

With a foundation in the metaphysical system of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne (among others), and a methodology that integrates both speculation and empirical verification, process thought brings its unique metaphysical perspective to bear on many fields of reflection and action. In general, seeks to elucidate the "developmental" nature of reality, emphasizing "becoming" rather than static existence or being. It also stresses the inter-relatedness of all entities. Process describes reality as ultimately made up of experiential events rather than enduring inert substances.

#### Philo 225 Philosophical Research

This course is designed to train students to do an intensive research in any major areas in philosophy.

#### Philo 226 Seminar

The course blends classroom sessions and directed research in an extensive examination of a western or eastern philosopher, or one major problem or group of related problems in philosophy.

#### Philo 227 Thesis Proposal/Writing