Ollscoil na Gaillimhe
University of Galway

Coláiste na nDán, na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta & an Léinn Cheiltigh
College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies

Philosophy

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Subject Overview

What is Philosophy?

In any field of study, it is too difficult to describe what it actually is in a single statement. This is particularly the case with philosophy. Derived from two Greek words, phiia (love) and sophia (wisdom), the term philosophy literally means 'the love of wisdom'. In its most basic sense, philosophy is simply the quest for understanding the world, and everything in it. It is concerned with "big questions" about the nature of the World, human existence, time, space, the cosmos, moral ideas, political aspirations, education, love, death, the law, religion and the meaning of life.

Why Study Philosophy?

Well, one reason is that it's very interesting. It introduces students to an amazing world of ideas and theories reformist and conservative, religious and secular, East and West, ancient and modern, mainstream and minority. In addition, because of its unique emphasis on clarity, argumentation, and critical evaluation, the study of philosophy can:

- Develop your power of reasoning
- Improve your ability to critique the view of others
- Teach you to get to the heart of an issue, and to distinguish it from less important matters
- Clarify and improve your communication skills, both written and spoken
- Help you to organise your thoughts rationally and to present them in a clear, coherent manner
- Develop skills that are widely transferable to other areas of study and to the professional world outside of university.

Subject Name:	Philosophy
CAO Code:	GY101
Duration:	3 years BA / 4 years BA (International)
Entry Requirements:	Minimum Grade H5 in two subjects and passes in four other subjects at O6/H7 level in the Leaving Certificate, including Irish, English, another language, and three other subjects recognised for entry purposes.

"He who says either that the time for philosophy has not yet come or that it has passed is like someone who says that the time for happiness has not yet come or that it has passed." That is how Epicurus saw things twenty-three hundred years ago, and it remains true today. Philosophy is the discipline that most directly and persistently probes what it is for the human soul to flourish.

Who Likes Philosophy?

There is no such thing as a typical philosopher. Ever since the ancient Greeks initiated the tradition of rational reflection on all aspects of human existence, variety has been the spice of philosophical life. Indeed, Philosophy is a diverse and continually changing discipline, to which people with greatly different interests are drawn.

Generally though, Philosophy is for those who enjoy wrapping their minds around complicated and profound problems It is for people who long to think for themselves, live meaningful, and contribute to the common good. It is for those who want to explore, discover and change the world.

Famous Philosophy Graduates

The study of Philosophy is more common that you think as evidenced by the following famous philosophy graduate:

- Harrison Ford (actor)
- Martin Luther King, Jr (civil rights leader)
- Gerald Levine (CEO, Time Warner)
- Iris Murdoch (Irish novelist)
- Bruce Lee (martial arts & actor)
- John Chancellor (journalist)
- Pope John Paul II

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Career Opportunities

Like the great majority of university disciplines. Philosophy is not a directly vocational subject. Nevertheless, a Philosophical education does provide graduates with numerous transferable skills that are highly prized by employer in every are of business and professional life.

Graduates of Philosophy are values for their quick intelligence, and excellent communication skills, their ability to reason clearly and independently. Moreover, because of the rapidly changing nature of the world of work, employers value Philosophical graduates flexibility and their capacity to apply their abilities to a wide variety of situations and challenges.

Because of their vast skill base, Graduates of Philosophy find employment in a broad range of careers. They pursue careers in the business world, government service, the media, as well in teaching or ministry. Others have gone on to further study in areas as diverse as Law, Theatre, public Relations, Health Promotion and Community Development.

Some graduates opt to make Philosophy their life-long endeavour and are to be found in universities the world over. Others work as activists on the cutting edge of social justice, ecological and spiritual concerns.

Find Out More

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