

PHILOSOPHY: PRE-LAW*

Law schools neither expect nor prefer a specific course of undergraduate study for their applicants [American Bar Association's guidelines for Law School preparation [LINK](#)]. However, it may be helpful to notice that philosophy majors consistently score very highly on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). Law schools are looking for students who have developed analytic and critical thinking skills and the capacity to present arguments in a compelling way. Philosophy is widely regarded as an excellent preparation for law school and a career in law and should therefore be taken into consideration when choosing a major, taking on a second (or third) major, adding a minor, or simply adding to a major. Above all, students should seek out courses that will give them extensive opportunities for analytical, critical writing, and oral analysis and presentation of complex arguments. The following suggestions reflect a collaborative effort by members of the UK Law School and the Department of Philosophy to identify a program of study that will put students in a good position to enter law school and the legal profession.

I. Courses in Philosophy.

Students should take at least one course in each of the following groups.

A. Logic:

PHI 120 (logic),
PHI 320 (symbolic logic I),
PHI 520 (symbolic logic II).

B. Introduction to Philosophy:

PHI 100 (knowledge and reality),
PHI 130 (morality and society),
PHI 135 (ethics of a human life),
PHI 205 (food ethics),
PHI 260 (history of philosophy I: Greek beginnings to the middle ages),
PHI 270 (history of philosophy II: Renaissance to the present era).

C. Intermediate Courses:

PHI 305 (health care ethics),
PHI 330 (ethics),
PHI 334 (business ethics),
PHI 335 (individual and society),
PHI 336 (environmental ethics),
PHI 337 (introduction to legal philosophy),
PHI 340 (introduction to feminism and philosophy),
PHI 350 (metaphysics and epistemology).

D. Advanced Courses:

PHI 500 (any course)
PHI 519 (critical social thought)
PHI 530 (ethical theory)
PHI 531 (advanced topics in ethics)
PHI 535 (social and political philosophy)
PHI 537 (philosophy of law)
PHI 540 (feminist philosophy)

II. Cognate courses

Students are also encouraged to take courses in other departments that develop basic writing, reasoning, or analytic skills and basic understanding of American society, political institutions, and principles of economics and finance. Courses of the following kinds would be especially useful:

In Political Science or Sociology: introductions to American government and legal institutions and basic social institutions.

In History: history of American legal institutions, constitutional history, and the like.

In Economics: introduction to basic micro-economics and welfare economics.

In Public Policy Analysis: techniques, methods, and ethical basis of policy analysis.

In English: legal writing, non-fiction composition.

(*credit to UNC Chapel Hill Philosophy for the template on which this handout was based; update March 2024)