

## THE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR AT LINCOLN CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

### Why study philosophy?

#### *For YOU*

To study philosophy is to cultivate a curiosity and a sense of wonder before the intricate order and mystery of the world around us and the world that is within us. It is to plumb the depths of life—to think about what is real, about how we know things, and about what is good.

The study of philosophy is a means of bringing about intellectual maturity. To learn about philosophy is not only about becoming a part of the conversation of the Great Tradition of humanity—though it is certainly that—it is also about developing skills that will serve you throughout your lifetime. To study philosophy is to become self-disciplined—to be trained to apply yourself to understand new ideas and new situations.

Philosophy is also a way of learning about yourself. In it, you discover your biases, your commitments, your desires, your propensities, your strengths, and your limitations. Through this process you can come to understand and decide what you think about the world and why—and so develop the self-confidence and humility that comes from such discipline and self-awareness.

#### *For YOUR CAREER*

Studying philosophy prepares you practically for what you are going to do for the rest of your life. In a marketplace where students can expect to change careers an average of three to five times during their life (with numerous jobs in these different careers), seeing college as simply training for a job is very short-sighted.

Philosophy, however, is the ultimate "transferable work skill."<sup>1</sup> It is about learning how to think (a most universal and most practical skill). Philosophy majors learn skills that prepare them for success in the workplace.

They learn how to solve problems, to communicate, and to think critically and reflectively about their own thoughts and the thoughts of others. A college graduate with these skills has "the goods"—as anyone who has worked with (or, heaven forbid, for) someone who lacks these skills can attest.

A philosophy major, then, is not only training to be a "philosopher" but is becoming well-rounded and well-trained for the real world in the long term. Philosophy majors pursue careers in teaching, law, medicine, business, consulting, computer science, writing and journalism, government work, social work, library work, and criminal justice...to name a few.

#### *For GOD*

While the study of philosophy offers many important benefits for you and your career, a *Christian* student should consider studying philosophy *for God*. Philosophy will take you to the front lines of the battlefield of ideas. And today, as throughout human history, many ideas are championed that oppose or undermine the reality and relevance of God. Perhaps God is calling you to a focused education to enter this contest of ideas.

All Christians are directed to have a "transformed mind" (Rom. 12:2) that is not taken "captive" by "deceptive philosophy" (Col. 2:8) but is able to "demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God" and to "take captive every thought" to Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5). The study of philosophy provides Christian students with the knowledge and critical skills, coupled with appropriate compassion, to excel in developing a Christian mind—and to do so for God.

<sup>1</sup> For example, see the Aug. 15, 1998 *Times of London* and the Dec. 18, 2008 issue of *U.S. News and World Report*.

## Why study philosophy at LCU?

### *Because of WHAT we teach*

When we study and teach philosophy at LCU, we do it in the context of our Christian confession—a worldview framed by Christian theology. This means that while we think about the nature of truth and the meaning of life, we do this with the understanding that there is a meaning to human life and that there is an ultimate truth that makes sense of the universe that is revealed in Jesus Christ. We teach philosophy as a part of our mission: “to nurture and equip Christians with a Biblical worldview to serve and lead in the church and the world.”

The philosophy major at LCU is designed to prepare students in conjunction with the rest of the LCU curriculum. Building on the Bible/Theology Core, every philosophy major is effectively a double major in philosophy *and* Bible/theology. Likewise, the philosophy major builds upon our robust interdisciplinary studies program—a full-orbed liberal arts educational experience incorporating history, art, literature, music, theology and, well, philosophy. The major is nested organically within the rest of the academic experience at LCU.

### *Because of THE WAY we teach*

As a program at a small university, the philosophy major can provide an intensive and intimate education. Many of the courses in the major are taught in a tutorial format that combines seminar-type discussion, independent reading and reflection, one-on-one consultation, and oral examinations. In this intensive format, you will learn not only about Plato and Nietzsche, but you will learn how to learn—how to read and to teach yourself new things.

At present, the philosophy program at LCU has more major professors per student than any other major on campus. Here you will also have numerous opportunities to interact with more advanced graduate students in philosophy and theology in the classroom and out. There are also our regular philosophy

symposia—where faculty share with the majors (and each other) their current research, and where advanced students get to share papers and projects with their peers. Finally, many philosophy majors are encouraged to enter into the LCU Honors Program—in which an honors student works toward the degree with a faculty mentor who guides him or her through an individually-tailored three year program of advanced study.

### *Because of WHO will teach*

The new B.A. degree in philosophy at LCU has highly-credentialed teaching faculty who represent different philosophical orientations and have a wide range of philosophical interests, expertise, and educational backgrounds. Dr. Christopher Simpson (Ph.D., University of Nottingham), Dr. Rich Knopp (Ph.D., University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana), and Dr. Steven Cone (Ph.D., Boston College) teach the required philosophy courses for this major. Drs. Simpson and Cone bring particular expertise in Continental (European) philosophy, while Dr. Knopp’s background is more in the Analytic (Anglo-American) philosophical tradition. (All three also have seminary degrees in theology.) As a result, the program offers both excellence and an exceptional balance in philosophical preparation.

## Why study philosophy at LCU?

To prepare deeply and richly for a life that is at once successful, meaningful, and faithful.