

STUDYING PHILOSOPHY AT USF

A Brief Guide for Students Considering a Career in the Health Professions

An April 6, 2008 article in the *New York Times* confirms what those of us who teach in philosophy programs had come to suspect: nationwide, in recent years, there has been a marked increase in the number of undergraduates studying philosophy. We have observed this increase at the University of South Florida, too. It's not hard to understand why. To study philosophy is, among other things, to study how to reason well. Philosophy majors perform at or very near the top on standardized tests such as the GRE, the LSAT, and the MCAT (See our website for references.). They are also in great demand in professions that demand the ability to think critically, write clearly and cogently, and argue forcefully. Such skills are likely to come in handy in a broad range of careers—which is fortunate for those who have them, as given the fast pace of economic and social change, most students entering college today will probably face at least one major career change.

For those interested in the biomedical professions—medicine, nursing, public health, pharmacy, and biological sciences, among others—the study of philosophy is especially valuable. Philosophy, whether pursued as a second major along with biology, as a minor, or simply for a few key courses, offers students the opportunity to look seriously at some of the ethical issues arising out of recent advances in biomedical technology, advancing globalization, crises in our health care system, and emerging public health threats such as global pandemics. These issues include the moral dimensions of life-extending treatments, new reproductive technologies and genetic engineering, and stem-cell research, to name a few. Philosophy also invites students to consider the social and political facets of science, medicine, and health policy, and the status of medicine as a science. The following courses at USF particularly recommend themselves to students considering a career in health or biomedical research:

- PHI 1103—Critical Thinking
- PHI 1401—Science and Society
- PHI 1600—Ethics
- PHI 2101—Logic
- PHI 3404—Philosophy of Science
- PHI 3633—Biomedical Ethics
- PHI 3640—Environmental Ethics

Students interested in more information should visit us online at <http://philosophy.usf.edu>. You may contact our Undergraduate Mentor, Douglas Jesseph at Jesseph@usf.edu, or our Undergraduate Advisor, Dr. Christianne Rinck at crinck@usf.edu. Students particularly interested the relationship between philosophy and medicine should contact Joshua Rayman at jrayman@usf.edu. We welcome enquiries from both prospective USF degree students and dual enrollment students.