

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE  
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD5222S  
Date of Senate Approval 3/31/2022

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Document 47 (PHIL):** **Change in distribution of required courses for the major and minor in Philosophy**

**Effective Date: Fall 2022**

**1. Delete:** On page 259, item I under **Major in Philosophy:**

I. Required courses in the major—40 hours: PHIL 101, 200, 230, 497, 498; 12 hours from the History of Western Philosophy: 250, 255, 260, 352; 4 hours from the History of Non-Western Philosophy: 217, 313, 315, 317; 4 hours from 303, 304, 305, 307, 310; 4 hours from 202, 320, 321, 323, 365.

**Add:** On page 259, in place of deleted entry:

I. Required courses for the major—40 hours: PHIL 101, 200, 230, 352, 497, 498; 12 hours from the **Histories of Philosophical Traditions**: 217, 250, 255, 260, 313, 315, 317; 4 hours from 214, 303, 304, 305, 307, 308, 310; and 4 hours from 202, 320, 321, 323, 365.

**2. Delete:** On page 259, under **Minor in Philosophy:**

20 hours in Philosophy: 4 hours from PHIL 100, 101, 200, 230; 8 hours from the History of Western Philosophy: 250, 255, 260, 352; 4 hours from the History of Non-Western Philosophy: 217, 313, 315, 317; 4 additional hours at the 300 level or higher.

**Add:** On page 259, in place of deleted entry:

20 hours in Philosophy: 4 hours from PHIL 100, 101, 103, 200, 230; 12 hours from the **Histories of Philosophical Traditions**: 217, 250, 255, 260, 313, 315, and 317, to include one course at the 300-level; and 4 additional hours at the 300 level or higher.

**Impact Statement:** The impacts of the proposed changes are expected to be beneficial both to students in the program and to faculty due to the streamlining, globalizing and decolonizing of the curriculum. There will also be a benefit to the institution overall, as streamlining our curriculum will allow us to staff more LAC courses in any given semester.

Benefits to students: Students will benefit by having more choice in the courses that they choose to fulfill the major requirements. Rather than being required to take 3 courses in history of Western Philosophy, they will be able to choose 3 courses from among the collected group of courses in the histories of Western and non-Western Philosophies. As all these courses are History of (World) Philosophy courses, and the differentiation between Western and non-Western has tended to reify a Western approach to the curriculum rather than globalizing and decolonizing

that curriculum, the students will also benefit from this breaking down of the historical tendency in Philosophy to over-emphasize Western traditions. Thus our curriculum is made more inclusive, which benefits students, and students' ability to choose is enhanced.

Faculty and students also benefit from this streamlining of the curriculum because it allows us to pull PHIL 352, Contemporary Philosophy, out of the category of History of Philosophy and emphasize it by making it a separately required course. Contemporary Philosophy sits somewhat uneasily in the current "History" requirement; although it often deals with issues that are treated through the history of philosophy, it looks at those issues through the lens of the latest, most current treatments in the field, often involving interdisciplinary perspectives. Making it one of the courses required of all majors benefits students by ensuring that they are all made familiar with at least one thoroughly up-to-date trend in philosophy; this is important for all majors to be current in the discipline, but especially so for students intending to go on to graduate study. Faculty and students benefit by more frequent opportunities for faculty to bring their most current research interests into the classroom in a dedicated and in-depth way, in the tradition of the teacher-scholar which we value at UNCA and in the Philosophy Department.

The institution as a whole will benefit because the streamlining will mean that instead of having to offer one course from each of two groups every semester (Western and non-Western History of Philosophy), we will be able to provide students with the ability to move forward in a timely way with just one offering each semester from the combined group. We will put the courses into a rotation such that each will be taught every so many semesters, and students will be able to plan ahead if they want a particular course. This will allow the department to staff more courses in HUM/LAC and service courses for other departments. It is expected to also lead to higher enrollments in the classes offered each semester, as there will be fewer competing classes at the 200 and 300 levels.

No impact is expected in terms of being able to staff the courses, as we are not increasing the number of courses offered each semester, or increasing the number of courses in the curriculum, but rather re-distributing the courses in the different groups students are required to choose from.

Concurrences were sought and received from Religious Studies, Africana Studies, and International Studies because the changes will affect how often the courses we cross-list with them will be offered. Concurrence was also sought and received from Human Rights Studies and Arts and Ideas due to the fact that the changes being made moved courses that are cross-listed with them into a new category of our curriculum. This may affect how frequently the courses PHIL 214 and 310 are offered, although because they tend to enroll very well, we will likely continue to offer them on roughly the same schedule as we have in recent years.

**Rationale:** The Philosophy Department is continually working toward creating an optimum curriculum, which includes ongoing attention to the globalization and decolonization of the discipline, our courses, and our course content as well as working to provide choice for students while helping them move through the requirements efficiently and in a timely manner. The current proposal should improve our curriculum on all these points, as noted in the impact statement. We are globalizing and decolonizing our curriculum by removing the (artificial) distinction "History of Philosophy" courses and "Non-Western Philosophy" courses; we are "centering" non-Western philosophical traditions by including them in the broader category of History of Philosophy. That category now becomes, really, the history of *world* philosophy rather than (artificially) supporting the traditional distinction which privileges the discourses, methods and interests of the West at the expense of the rich and deep traditions of other cultures/world philosophies. We believe this is a necessary shift, and that it is past time for it to be made.

Further, as good campus citizens, the Department is concerned to make the best possible effort to support the institutional work of maximizing our resources by teaching well-enrolled courses as well as to honor its obligations to contribute to LAC and other campus programs. This proposal will make it possible for us to offer fewer classes each semester, such that our enrollments in the classes we do offer should be higher than they sometimes are currently. Consequently we should have fewer instances of “low-enrolled classes”. Further, teaching at least one less class from the combined History of Philosophy group each semester will allow us to offer at least one more course each semester in Humanities or FYS 178 or in the many other programs we currently support with our offerings (Arts and Ideas, WGSS, ESI, etc.). But we should be able to do this without creating any loss of necessary courses for our majors/minors, as we will have at least one course from each group they are required to choose from every semester. Students thus will be able to make appropriate progress in the curriculum. The courses will all be placed on a specific rotation so that student planning for their progress, and for specific topics they are interested in, should be easy and reliable.

Moving PHIL 352, Contemporary Philosophy, out of the History category and placing it in with the other basic required courses allows us to emphasize for our students the importance of current trends and studies in the discipline. Because we cannot offer courses on all topics in the field, we are using this revolving-topic (and repeatable) course to help bring our students up-to-date with regard to at least one specific topic.

Moving the courses PHIL 214, Philosophy of Human Rights and PHIL 308, Philosophy of Literature, into the groups of courses “Philosophy of...” is simply a matter of curricular housekeeping that was overlooked earlier when the courses were developed. Again, we are attempting to maximize both students’ choices and departmental/curricular flexibility.

#### Appendix A

##### Expected rotation and staffing of History of (World) Philosophy courses

Fall 22	Spring 23	Fall 23	Spring 24	Fall 24	Spring 25	Fall 25	Spring 26	Fall 26	Spring 27
313	260	315	250	317	255	217	260	313	250
Asian Philosophy	Modern Philosophy	Islamic Philosophy	Ancient Greek Philosophy	Africana Philosophy	Medieval Philosophy	Buddhist Philosophy	Modern Philosophy	Asian Philosophy	Ancient Greek Philosophy
Maitra or Burchard	Davis, Butler, or Maitra	Williams	Davis or Burchard	Burchard	Williams	Maitra	Davis, Butler, or Maitra	Maitra or Burchard	Davis or Burchard