

Carleton

Department of Philosophy

507-222-4232

Hello Friend,

Congratulations on your acceptance to Carleton! Given your interest in philosophy, the Carleton admissions team clearly made an excellent decision by admitting you. While there are many interesting fields to pursue at Carleton, our field seeks to provide a [philosophical education](#) as well as tools for you to lead a philosophical life. As philosophers, we pursue knowledge, wisdom, and the good life; it is our hope that you can join us in these endeavors!

What does it mean to *do* philosophy? Well, that's a philosophical question! Philosophers study a large range of topics including the nature of time, morality, beauty, scientific principles, trauma, knowledge, and much more. Our discipline doesn't have a singular identity, but instead is filled with opportunities to explore ideas, theories, and practices across many disciplines. What unites us as a discipline is our shared commitments to asking important *questions*, offering *reasons* to back up our answers, providing *evidence* for our views, exploring the *limits of our arguments*, and scrutinizing harmful practices. That means that students of philosophy can expect an emphasis on clarity and rigor as well as a welcoming environment for curious and critical thinkers.

Some questions you'll encounter in our [courses](#) include:

- ❖ Are human beings radically individual or political by nature? What difference does it make for the existence and maintenance of political communities? (Phil 113: The Individual & the Political Community)
- ❖ Could we ever prove God's existence? (PHIL 272: Early Modern Philosophy)
- ❖ What is consciousness? (PHIL 225: Philosophy of Mind)
- ❖ What is justice and who gets to define it in a deeply ideologically divided and socially stratified society? (PHIL 232: Social and Political Philosophy)
- ❖ Are values "out there" waiting to be discovered? Or do we just make them up? (PHIL 213: Ethics)
- ❖ What are the links between climate change and capitalism? (PHIL 214: Ecology, Ethics, and Economics)
- ❖ What role, if any, should racial categories play in the practice of medicine? (PHIL 123: Medical Ethics)
- ❖ What makes you the same person throughout your life? Is time fast or slow? (PHIL 211: Being, Time, and Identity)
- ❖ What is knowledge and do we have any? (PHIL 212: Epistemology)
- ❖ What exactly is bias? Is it always bad? What makes it bad when it is? (PHIL 203: Bias PHIL 203: Bias, Belief, Community, Emotion)

We hope that these questions excite and interest you! If the gripping nature of the questions we deal with aren't reason enough to spend time with us, then you might also consider that philosophy is excellent preparation for almost any career or field of study. Why does a philosophy major prepare you well for things like graduate school, law school, professional life, or medical school?¹ Because philosophy majors are trained to *think* and to *write* with clarity and rigor. Majors are trained to interrogate assumptions, engage in clear discussion on complex topics, think through the implications of arguments, and reflect on ways to improve methods or techniques. If you're still unconvinced, we can always make another argument and we're happy to do so!

¹ The following website contains additional details and links to some statistics:

<https://sites.google.com/site/whystudyphilosophy/>.



We're a small department, which means that our majors form a tight knit community who get to know us (the professors) really well. We hope you'll think about joining that community. Do [visit our departmental web site](#) and if you are interested in what each of us is doing don't hesitate to [get in touch with individual professors](#). If you have any questions that I might be able to answer about philosophy at Carleton or about Carleton generally, feel free to contact me by email at: dgroll@carleton.edu.

Hope to see you next year!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Groll', written in a cursive style.

Daniel Groll
Professor of Philosophy and Department Chair