

Philosophy minor

Course Year: 2018-2019	Study: Chemistry
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Coordinator: Mitchell Groen

I am Houdijn Beekhuis, I am currently in my 4th year of Chemistry and about to finish my bachelor. I am doing the track Chemistry of Life and last year I have completed my minor in philosophy. I will talk about my experience with this minor and my process of choosing it.

I mostly used the UG website when searching for a minor I wanted to do. I looked for a minor outside of the faculty, because I was interested in learning a different field than natural sciences. I already had a philosophy course during secondary school, which I liked. So I looked into the philosophy minor. I looked at what fields of philosophy were treated during the minor, these were fields I liked, so that is why I chose to do this minor.

I did research beforehand. Most research was done on my own as there was no information market. My priorities for choosing a minor was choosing something that interested me and not something that would be best for my career. The bachelor is already oriented on preparing for a career in chemistry and because I am not just interested in chemistry, I wanted to use the minor space to broaden my knowledge.

It is important to realise that if you did not like the Ethics and philosophy of science in the course Science, Ethics, Technology and Society it is not a minor that you would be interested in. During the minor Philosophy you go deeper into the different views and where they disagree than in these parts of the SETS course.

The reason I chose this minor is so I could broaden my field of vision, I was also already interested in philosophy and wanted to learn more. I expected to learn about the history of philosophy and improve my critical thinking.

During the minor I primarily learned to think philosophically. Starting with what point of views the philosophers have and what their opinion would be on certain discussions. They gave me dilemmas I had to say what the point of view was of a certain philosopher. An example of a dilemma is whether a field can be considered science or not, another example is what is the best way in ethics to act according to a philosopher. In homework exercises of some courses I had to explain if I agreed with the philosopher's view or not.

Another thing I learned was critical thinking. Critical thinking includes questioning assumptions and think about what conclusions follow when taking certain assumptions in an argument. As an example Hume questions the assumption of causality: The assumption that a certain cause necessarily leads to a certain effect. This also has consequences for science, because you cannot assume a cause or relation based on correlation of two events. For this is it important to reason logically (which is also the subject of the course 'reasoning and arguing'). Logical reasoning proved quite easy for me, this might be due to my background in chemistry.

During the minor I have learned about the history of philosophy and how to think critically and question assumptions. So my expectations were correct. The minor also provides relevant knowledge and skills that can be used in Chemistry or other natural sciences, like philosophy of science and thinking critically in general.

Hopefully I have given you useful information about the philosophy minor and maybe even inspired you to do it yourself. Good luck with your minor choice!