Undergraduate Research Opportunity

Philosophical Development and Psychological Growth

Prof. Michelle Saint  
Philosophy

Hours required p/week: 3-5  
Credits anticipated: 1-2

Is philosophy a form of psychotherapy? This project is intended to analyze the relationship between philosophical growth, as experienced in a philosophy classroom, and psychological / emotional growth, as experienced in personal therapy with a mental health counselor. Comparisons between studying philosophy and certain forms of psychotherapy (especially cognitive behavioral therapy) are growing more common. The goal of this project is to determine whether these comparisons are appropriate. This will involve looking into topics such as: the nature of philosophical reasoning, the role of emotions in philosophy, the value of studying philosophy, and the connection between philosophical beliefs and psychological well-being. This project relates primarily to the philosophy of mind, meta-philosophy, and the philosophy of psychology.

Research assistant’s duties:
Develop an annotated bibliography. This involves researching the topic to locate relevant articles, reading those relevant articles, and producing summaries of them. The summaries will highlight the main line of argumentation presented in the article, key terminology, and how the article interacts with other relevant articles covering the same topic. Meet with instructor (in person or online) at regular intervals to discuss progress.

Required skills or qualifications:
The selected student must have previously taken at least two upper-division philosophy courses, ideally more. The selected student must be capable of reading and speaking English fluently.

Skills student will acquire:
By engaging in this research opportunity, the student will have the opportunity to develop the skills associated with: identifying key components to complex, academically rigorous pieces of writing; expressing complex philosophical argumentation simply and precisely; identifying and expressing general themes within a body of literature; identifying and expressing significant points of connection between separate articles written on similar topics; researching interdisciplinary topics, using a variety of research tools; discriminating appropriately between located materials that are useful for one’s project and those that are not; developing and maintaining an annotated bibliography.