Advice for Undergrads
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Advice for anyone wanting a complete undergraduate education in Philosophy:

Take Logic courses *right away*. Preferably, take a Propositional Logic course this or next semester, and take a Predicate Logic course the following semester (sometimes these are taught in a single course). You will simply be unable to fully understand most contemporary Philosophy papers if you do not at least understand Predicate Logic. Check with the instructor about the content of any logic course at USC if you have had a logic course before; many of the logic courses at USC overlap, even if they are at different levels.

As for content of your other courses, I recommend:
- one intro course in each of
        Ethics (this will probably be applied Ethics)
        Metaphysics/Epistemology
- at least one intermediate and/or advanced course in each of
        Ethics (these will probably be on Normative Ethics and Meta-Ethics)
        Epistemology
        Metaphysics
        Philosophy of Language/History of Analytic Philosophy
           (Note: do not take advanced classes before intermediate ones)
- at least one course in each of
        Ancient Philosophy
        The Rationalists (Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz),
        The Empiricists (Locke, Berkeley, Hume)
        Kant
           (Note: These philosophers are divided between courses in a variety of ways; just make sure you learn about all of them.)

You might also consider taking courses in Philosophy of Religion, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Mathematics, etc., if you're interested in those or related topics. And I definitely recommend taking as many courses as you can in your area of particular interest.

As I have written it, you should take at least 11 Philosophy courses (each of those listed above, and 1 or 2 logic courses), though you may find that the material is divided between courses you take slightly differently from how I've listed it. It is a good idea to write to professors prior to taking their courses, to inquire about which topics they will cover, to make sure they do not problematically overlap what you have already learned. Further, you may be able to avoid taking some of these courses by doing your own study during the summer – e.g., by learning Propositional Logic on your own (working through a textbook on it) and then taking a course that covers Predicate Logic.

Finally, it is a good idea to supplement this with independent studies, if you are interested in pursuing Philosophy beyond college (or even if you're simply very interested in it). This can also help you a great deal with your writing.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to schedule an appointment to talk with me about this.

Advice for undergraduates planning on going to graduate school in Philosophy:

I was recently asked by an undergrad in my department for advice about how he ought to spend the next summer. It occurred to me that it might be helpful if I wrote up a few pieces of advice on this and preparing for grad school in general. I am not going to comment on *whether* one ought to choose to go to graduate school in Philosophy. This advice is for those who have already made that choice. Also, much of this advice can be applied to other subjects as well, substituting the name of your preferred subject for 'Philosophy'.

First, **immerse yourself in Philosophy**: take as many Philosophy classes as you can. (Or at least, as many as you can while doing well in them: doing well in the Philosophy courses you take is crucial.) For a Philosophy major in our department, you are required to only take 8 Philosophy courses. But if you are planning on going to graduate school, I recommend having many more. (When I went to graduate school, I had taken 29 Philosophy courses. My school was on a trimester system, so I got to take 1/3 more courses each year. But taking a lot of Philosophy courses gives you multiple benefits: it gives you a more complete idea of what doing Philosophy for a living might involve, and it makes you a better philosopher (and so strengthens your grad school application both directly and indirectly).)

Follow the general advice I gave above about which courses to take. In addition to the logic courses I recommended, it would be good for you to also take a more advanced course (like Modal Logic or Meta-Logic, e.g., Phil 450) before you graduate.

And in addition to the other Philosophy courses I listed above, I recommend taking as many courses as you can in your area of particular interest.

Also, find other people taking Philosophy courses who are smart and willing to talk Philosophy outside of class. Fellow students are a great resource: If they know more about a given topic than you, you get to learn about the topic. If they know less, then by teaching them you learn how to formulate and explain your ideas and respond to questions and objections. If you are interested in finding such a group of people but don't know any yet, contact me and I'll put you in touch with one another.

Second, **talk to your professors**. I am shocked at how many philosophy majors fail to do this. Don't be shy about attending office hours. Come with questions, but feel free to ask things like, "What are you working on?" or "I just read this paper in my spare time. May I ask you about it?" Office hours not only give you a chance to interact more about Philosophy, but they give you a chance to do so with someone who knows a bunch about it. It's a great opportunity to learn, and in the process you end up building relationships with the people who you will eventually ask to write letters of recommendation for you. I know professors can sometimes be intimidating, but it's their job to talk to you during this time; overcome the intimidation.

Also, your professors are an invaluable resource when it comes to advice about which Philosophy courses to take. Don't be afraid to ask them. And feel free to contact people teaching courses you're interested in, to find out more about the course content in advance. Finally, consider pursuing an independent study (see next point).

Third, **put a lot of work into your writing sample**. You should start thinking about it pretty early. I recommend asking to do an independent study, or at least, asking for guided extra-curricular study, sometime during your junior year. (This is another way in which knowing your professors will be handy.) During this guided study, research a topic you have some ideas about (or are simply very interested in), and draft a paper. Then, during the rest of the year and following summer, get comments on the paper. (Presenting at conferences is a great way to get feedback.) Get comments wherever you can: fellow students, various professors that you're working with, and even philosophers you know at other universities. By the time you prepare your grad school applications in the fall of your senior year, your writing sample should be pretty polished.

Fourth**, attend some professional Philosophy conferences**. The Pacific APA is an excellent choice, and frequently takes place close to Los Angeles (in 2011 it will be in San Diego). These conferences allow you to hear bunches of presentations of cutting-edge papers philosophers are working on. And it allows you to see more of the research-side of the profession. (To find some of this cutting-edge Philosophy without going to conferences, look here: http://philpapers.org/) It also gives you a chance to interact with some very interesting people some of whom you will, if you remain in Philosophy, run into again and again throughout your life. If you can, you should present at some of these conferences. You can find calls for papers here: http://philosophycfp.blogspot.com/ Ask a professor for advice about where to send your papers. (And be careful to not publish through a conference unless you are advised to; don't *ever* publish in an undergraduate philosophy journal.)

Fifth, **pursue other extra-curricular Philosophy**. Summer schools are a great idea. You might also attend an undergraduate Philosophy club, and I certainly recommend attending departmental colloquia. (Again, I'm shocked at how many Philosophy majors fail to do this.) And if you have extra time and are super-

motivated, you may want to put together a reading group or even organise an undergraduate Philosophy conference. (If you are going to organise conferences at USC, though, email me first.)

[Note: the above is my own personal advice, and is not official advice from the USC Philosophy Department. If you have any questions, I encourage you to email me at kleinsch@usc.edu]