



Дисциплина «философия» в современной системе высшего образования: сравнительная аналитика актуального состояния

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Введение. В условиях утилитаризации высшего образования обостряется вопрос о месте философии в учебных планах. Такие авторитетные международные организации, как ЮНЕСКО, настоятельно рекомендуют преподавать философию на всех уровнях системы образования. *Цель работы* – теоретико-аналитически определить функции курса «философия» в современной высшей школе и сопоставить российский опыт с практиками США, чтобы выявить общие тенденции и проблемы.

Материалы и методы. Использованы анализ новейшей российской и зарубежной литературы и нормативных документов, сопоставительный (РФ/США) и историко-логический подходы, контент-анализ, а также обобщение данных опросов студентов как иллюстративный материал.

Результаты. На нормативном уровне философия в РФ сохраняет обязательный статус, однако фиксируются сокращение часов и формализация освоения, что снижает мотивацию и качество усвоения. Выявлен функциональный вклад курса: мировоззренческий, методологический, аксиологический, критико-аналитический и развитие «гибких» навыков мышления. Сравнение с США показывает иную институциональную модель (через требования General Education) при сходных вызовах – необходимости демонстрации доказуемых эффектов и практико-ориентированных форм обучения. Предложены направления обновления: междисциплинарная интеграция (этика технологий, философия науки и техники и др.), интерактивные форматы (кейс-дискуссии, аргументативные эссе, дебаты), адаптация содержания под профиль подготовки и внедрение процедур измерения образовательных результатов.

Заключение. Философия остается ключевым компонентом качественного высшего образования и должна сохранять устойчивый статус при одновременной модернизации содержания и методик; оптимальна модель, сочетающая всеохватность (РФ) и вариативность с междисциплинарной интеграцией (США). Рекомендованы институциональные меры поддержки и внедрение доказательных практик преподавания.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

образование, содержание образования, философия, преподавание философии, высшая школа, университетское образование

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The Discipline of Philosophy in the Modern Higher Education System: A Comparative Analysis of the Current State of Affairs

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. In the context of the utilitarianizing of higher education, the question of the place of philosophy in curricula is becoming increasingly acute. Authoritative international organisations such as UNESCO strongly recommend teaching philosophy at all levels of the education system. *The aim of this work* is to theoretically and analytically define the functions of the 'Philosophy' course in modern higher education and to compare Russian experience with practices in the United States in order to identify common trends and problems.

Materials and Methods. The analysis of the latest Russian and foreign literature and regulatory documents, comparative (Russian Federation/United States) and historical-logical approaches, content analysis, as well as the summarisation of student survey data as illustrative material were used.

Results. At the regulatory level, philosophy retains its compulsory status in the Russian Federation, but there has been a reduction in teaching hours and a formalisation of learning, which reduces motivation and the quality of learning. The functional contribution of the course has been identified: worldview, methodological, axiological, critical-analytical, and the development of "flexible" thinking skills. A comparison with the United States shows a different institutional model (through General Education requirements) with similar challenges – the need to demonstrate provable effects and practice-oriented forms of teaching. Areas for renewal are proposed: interdisciplinary integration (technology ethics, philosophy of science and technology, etc.), interactive formats (case discussions, argumentative essays, debates), adaptation of content to the training profile, and the introduction of procedures for measuring educational outcomes.

Conclusion. Philosophy remains a key component of quality higher education and should retain its stable status while modernising its content and methodologies; the optimal model combines comprehensiveness (Russian Federation) and variability with interdisciplinary integration (United States). Institutional support measures and the introduction of evidence-based teaching practices are recommended.

KEYWORDS

education, educational content, philosophy, teaching philosophy, higher education, university education

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of rapid changes in the modern education system in Russia and a number of other leading countries around the world, the question of the place and role of philosophy in higher education is becoming particularly relevant. In its 2007 policy report, UNESCO specifically noted that philosophy should be taught at all levels of the education system and, most importantly, that its content should be updated to reflect contemporary challenges and linked to other disciplines [1]. Philosophy has historically been at the core of university education – it has often been called the ‘mother of all sciences,’ providing the conceptual foundations of knowledge. However, today there are contradictory trends: on the one hand, philosophical knowledge is in demand for the formation of critical thinking, ethical culture and a holistic worldview among specialists; on the other hand, utilitarian approaches in education are gaining ground, calling into question the need for ‘impractical’ humanities disciplines. In recent years, many countries have seen a decline in student interest in philosophy programmes and even the closure of philosophy departments due to falling enrolment. In the United States, for example, a number of philosophy departments have been cut or merged with others due to declining student numbers, and some authors have spoken of the threat of philosophy ‘disappearing’ from university education. At the same time, foreign researchers note that philosophy as a course of study is undergoing a crisis of legitimacy and needs to defend its place in the core curriculum of general education [2]. Similar trends are evident in post-Soviet countries. In Belarus and Russia, for example, integration into the global educational space, the transition to standards such as the Bologna Process, and a focus on applied skills have led to a reduction in the number of hours devoted to philosophy in non-philosophical specialties and a ‘compression’ of the course content. According to researchers, the state of philosophy teaching in higher education today can be characterized as critical, largely due to the widespread view that philosophical knowledge is ‘unnecessary and impractical.’

It should be emphasized that this is not a local problem, but a global one. Throughout the world, the humanities are under pressure from the trend towards commercialization and utilitarianism in education, and philosophy is a striking example of this. Nevertheless, recent literature has established the understanding that it is philosophy that makes a unique contribution to the formation of 21st-century competencies – the ability to think critically, reason ethically, and see the whole picture of the world.

M. Nussbaum shows that in the digital age, it is the humanities, including philosophy, that support ‘civic virtue,’ empathy, and rational public discourse [3]. S. Kristinsson develops the idea of a ‘university for democracy,’ arguing for the centrality of philosophical education in fostering civic agency [4]. A. Schinkel and D. de Ruyter use the categories of ‘human flourishing’ and ‘wonder’ to set a value framework for education, where philosophy cultivates horizons of meaning [5]. M. Peters, M. Tesar, and L. Jackson thematize ‘new realism’ in the philosophy of education as an attempt to reconnect knowledge, truth, and educational practice [6]. D. Bakhurst philosophically criticizes techno-instrumentalism in education, defending the meaningful and storytelling components of teaching [7]. M. Hand, in a programmatic introductory article, articulates the normative guidelines for educational policy, in which philosophical reflection is a necessary condition [8]. J. Culp discusses ‘educational justice’ and brings the philosophy of education into the field of normative justice theory [9]. S. Heleta and J. Bagus raise the issue of decolonizing knowledge and curricula, showing how philosophical criticism of the canon expands epistemological diversity [10]. B. Macfarlane, analyzing the ethics of multiple co-authorship, transfers the professional-ethical perspective to the academic environment, emphasising the role of philosophy in regulating scientific communication [11]. In the Russian discourse, V.A. Kureenna reconstructs the principles of liberal education and proves that philosophy is its conceptual axis [12]; A.M. Rutkevich outlines three models of the university and shows that the stability of institutions is ensured by a philosophical framework of meaning and values [13]. A.A. Huseynov, drawing on Russian experience, argues for the continuity of the connection between philosophy and higher education as a space for free thought [14].

T. Metcalf systematically argues that philosophy should be included in the core curriculum: it has been proven to develop critical thinking and ethical skills better than most other subjects [15]. R. Wilson shows how the ‘core’ of liberal education falls apart without philosophy and proposes models for reformatting general requirements with an emphasis on philosophical modules [16]. S. Furey and S. Springer defend philosophy as a ‘university good’: philosophy courses shape critical citizens and

reduce the segregation of 'professional bubbles' on campus [17]. J. Gatley demonstrates the external value of philosophy for academic achievement and social competence – an argument in favour of the spiral inclusion of philosophy in pre-university education and at university [18]. D. Bakhurst and M. Hand (within this cluster) provide a theoretical justification for policies to include philosophy in the core curriculum; their texts serve as a 'meta-framework' for the arguments of T. Metcalf and R. Wilson [7; 8]. In the Russian discourse, G.A. Antipov asks the direct question 'do universities need philosophy?' and, comparing practices, comes to the conclusion that it is necessary to preserve its compulsory status when updating the content [19].

M. Prinzing and M. Vazquez, using a sample of hundreds of thousands of students, show that the study of philosophy correlates with higher scores on logical-verbal tests and intellectual openness even after controlling for predispositions – one of the strongest contemporary empirical arguments for philosophy [20]. N. El Soufi and B. See conduct a critical review of causal designs for teaching critical thinking to students and show that targeted teaching and philosophical practices yield sustained skill gains [21]. P. Abrami demonstrates in a meta-analysis that explicit critical thinking teaching strategies (including philosophical discussions and logical tasks) significantly improve results [2]. H. Lorencová and colleagues confirm in a systematic review of higher education that the effects are sustainable when the principles of explicit cognitive goal setting and argumentation practice are followed [22]. A. Ostendorf proposes a 'heterodox didactics' of critical thinking, where philosophical conflicts and clashes of frameworks serve as a didactic tool [23]. E. Kerruish describes post-digital forms of teaching critical thinking, showing how philosophical practices are translated into hybrid and online modes without losing their depth of meaning [24]. G. Dunne philosophically revises contemporary rhetoric, insisting on the substantive core of thinking skills cultivated by philosophy [25]. In Russian literature, V.V. Rubtsov and S.B. Malykh lay the methodological foundations for 'critical thinking as the goal of university education,' articulating how philosophical logic translates into diagnosable educational outcomes [26].

J. Sastre and V. McKenna show that sustainable educational effects arise when philosophers and engineers teach together and case studies are included in specialized courses [27]. D. Smith and A. Burstein criticize 'add-on' ethics modules in computer science and propose integral models where philosophical questions are woven into technical courses [28]. Using Russian material, V.V. Shlyapnikov discusses the ethics of data and social networks, showing that philosophical reflection is necessary for the training of specialists in digital industries [29]. D.P. Kozolupenko, drawing on the philosophy of science and technology, conceptualises the place of philosophy as a methodology for interdisciplinary connections [30]. N.M. Kropachev and E.V. Kolotushkin justify the introduction of value modules into professional programmes (from medical to engineering), emphasizing the need for institutional oversight of "ethical literacy" [31].

V.N. Porus conceptualizes the 'crisis of university philosophy' as a gap between mission statements and classroom practice, pointing to the need for a reflective restructuring of courses [32]. V.A. Yakovlev examines philosophical education 'in the coordinates of science,' identifying the need to strengthen the philosophy of science and logic in non-core programmes [33]. G.A. Antipov compares the arguments for and against compulsory education based on institutional material, concluding that it is only possible to maintain its status by updating its content and assessment [19]. In the English-language context, this cluster is echoed in the texts by T. Metcalf and R. Wilson (compulsory/core) [15; 16] and the case studies by D. Bakhurst (didactics and techno-mode) [7], which highlights the parallel with Russian discussions on formalism and 'optimization.'

An analysis of scientific sources shows that there is still no single solution to the problem of integrating philosophy into modern higher education. Foreign works in recent years have focused primarily on justifying the usefulness of philosophy for the development of critical thinking and proposing strategies for including philosophy courses in the structure of higher education. Russian studies, on the other hand, emphasize the specific difficulties of the post-Soviet legacy in teaching philosophy – from the legacy of ideologized teaching of philosophy to the current need to increase the practical significance of the course for students of different specialties. At the same time, neither foreign nor Russian literature has sufficiently addressed the role and place of philosophy in the higher education system in the current context, taking into account both global trends and national specifics (e. g., a comparative analysis of the situation in Russia and abroad). This work aims to fill this gap.

The aim of the study is to conduct a theoretical and analytical review and conceptual analysis of the place of the discipline of 'Philosophy' in the modern system of higher education, to identify its functions and significance for the training of specialists, and to compare Russian experience with foreign experience in order to identify common trends and characteristics.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been set:

1. To review the latest foreign and Russian literature on the problem of teaching philosophy in higher education in order to identify the main trends, problems and missing links in the study of this topic.
2. Analyze the current state and status of the discipline of philosophy in the Russian higher education system (regulatory framework, course content, student perception) and identify existing problems and challenges.
3. Compare the role and approaches to teaching philosophy in Russia with practices in one of the foreign systems (using the example of the USA) to identify similarities and differences, as well as potential areas for improvement in the teaching of philosophy in Russian higher education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is theoretical and analytical in nature and is based on an interdisciplinary approach combining philosophical and pedagogical analysis. The materials used are scientific publications from the last five years on the topic of teaching philosophy and the humanities in higher education institutions, including articles from international databases (Scopus, Web of Science) and leading Russian journals on the philosophy of education. Regulatory and methodological documents from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation (federal state educational standards), which establish the place of philosophy in curricula, were also used as sources, allowing theoretical discussions to be correlated with actual educational practice. In addition, data from empirical surveys were taken into account, such as the results of a student survey on the usefulness of philosophy courses, in order to reflect the students' views on the chosen research topic.

A set of research methods was used to solve the tasks set. The basic method was literature analysis (content analysis of scientific texts) followed by a synthesis of ideas to form a holistic concept. A comparative method was applied: the experience and trends of Russian higher education were compared with foreign (primarily American) ones to identify common patterns and unique differences. A historical-logical approach was also used – the evolution of the status of philosophy in universities from the Soviet period to the present day was examined, which made it possible to understand the genesis of existing problems. The work implements the principles of systematicity and comprehensiveness: the role of the discipline of 'Philosophy' in the higher education system is studied not in isolation, but in relation to the educational environment and social demands. Elements of a sociological approach can also be noted in the interpretation of student survey data and the analysis of society's attitude towards philosophical knowledge.

The methodological basis of the study was formed by the ideas of the philosophy of education and didactics of higher education. The analytical part takes into account the concepts of the competence-based approach (considering the contribution of philosophy to the formation of universal competences of graduates) and the cultural studies approach (the role of philosophy in the transmission of values and meanings). When analyzing foreign experience, the authors relied on the principles of comparative studies in education. In the critical review of the literature, the need to select high-quality sources (priority was given to works in international journals and publications on the list of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Russian Federation) and relevance (most of the sources used were published no earlier than 2018–2019, which corresponds to the claim of novelty of the research) was taken into account.

Thus, the combination of theoretical analysis, comparative research and reliance on empirical data made it possible to comprehensively examine the problem of the place of philosophy in the modern system of higher education and to formulate well-founded conclusions.

RESULTS

In the Russian Federation, philosophy is firmly established in the structure of higher education at the regulatory level. According to the current federal state educational standard (FSES 3++), each bachelor's programme must include a course in philosophy as part of the compulsory subjects in the general humanities and social sciences cycle. In practice, this means that regardless of their specialization – whether they are engineers, doctors or economists – all students at Russian universities study the basics of philosophy at a certain stage of their education. A similar requirement applies to the training of scientific and teaching staff: since Soviet times and to this day, all postgraduate students are required to take an exam in the history and philosophy of science. This tradition creates a unique situation: practically every university, including technical and narrow-profile ones, employs specialists capable of teaching philosophical disciplines (often in separate departments of philosophy or philosophical and sociological sciences). This creates the conditions for the presence of philosophy in the educational space of any university.

However, normative presence does not yet guarantee high status and quality of teaching. Empirical data and expert opinions point to a number of problems. During the educational reforms of the 1990s and 2000s, which involved the rejection of the ideologised Soviet legacy and the transition to a two-tier system (bachelor's and master's degrees), the content of philosophy courses underwent significant changes. In the USSR, philosophy (more precisely, 'Marxist-Leninist philosophy') was a compulsory subject, but it served primarily an ideological function. After 1991, the course became more pluralistic in content (including the history of Western philosophy, the basics of logic, ethics, etc.). In the mid-2000s, new changes took place: in postgraduate studies, the course 'History of Philosophy' was transformed into 'History and Philosophy of Science' with an emphasis on the philosophical problems of scientific knowledge. This required a certain reorientation on the part of the teachers; it turned out that not all philosophy teachers were prepared to teach the philosophy of science, which led to the organization of short-term professional development courses for teachers. This fact is important because the quality of teaching directly affects students' perception of the value of the course.

Over the past 10–15 years, the reduction in the volume of philosophy courses has become a problem. In the curricula of many non-specialized fields, the total number of hours allocated to philosophy has been reduced by about half (in a number of universities, the course, which previously lasted two semesters, has been reduced to one). For example, it has been noted that since 2012, technical universities have reduced their philosophy courses from two semesters to one, with a particularly sharp decline in the number of lectures [34]. This 'optimization' was explained by the desire to lighten the curriculum and strengthen practical training, but its side effect has been an impoverishment of students' philosophical education [34]. This is indirectly confirmed by a study at the Belarusian State Medical University, which notes that new educational standards and the information needs of society have led to the displacement of a number of social and humanitarian disciplines and a reduction in the number of hours devoted to philosophy [35]. The authors of that study state that the state of philosophy teaching has become critical in comparison with other disciplines, as many in society are convinced of the 'unnecessary' nature of philosophical knowledge [35].

In addition, there is the problem of student motivation and attitude. On the one hand, some students recognize the importance of philosophy for their development. Thus, during a survey at a pedagogical university, we found that among students who are future teachers of physics and mathematics, 60% of respondents recognized the need to study social sciences and humanities at a pedagogical university, regardless of their field of study, and 27% even named philosophy as the most useful of the disciplines studied in this block. On the other hand, about half of the students are skeptical about the compulsory course: the survey confirmed the existence of a problem in understanding the role and assessing the significance of philosophy in the professional training of future doctors. Many students perceive philosophy as an abstract academic discipline that is detached from practice and studied formally for credit. This attitude is partly provoked by organizational factors: for example, the transition of the philosophy exam in many specialties to a differentiated credit format reduces the motivation to delve deeply into the material. Another contributing factor is that a large amount of complex philosophical material is often taught mainly in lecture form over a short period of time, which makes it difficult to fully comprehend. As a result, students may get the impression that philosophy is a set of abstract ideas that are of little use in their future work, rather than living knowledge that helps them learn to critically perceive information.

Despite these difficulties, the results of the study confirm that the presence of philosophy in the university curriculum is of fundamental importance for the training of modern specialists. Conceptual analysis has revealed a number of key functions that the study of philosophy fulfils in the context of higher education: worldview, methodological, axiological (value-based), critical-analytical, as well as developing "flexible thinking skills". Let us consider them in more detail.

First, philosophy helps students form a holistic view of the world and their place in it. In the process of studying classical philosophical problems – from ontology to philosophical anthropology – students learn to develop their own views, understand different worldviews, and correlate scientific knowledge with more general humanitarian and existential questions. In an era of narrow specialization and fragmentation of knowledge, philosophy serves as an integrating principle, allowing disparate facts to be linked into a single conceptual framework. Professor M. Dummett (University of Oxford) noted that philosophy occupies a special niche of 'human wisdom' in culture, that is, it is responsible for the accumulation and transmission of extremely general orientations and principles of thinking [36]. For students immersed in the study of applied disciplines, a philosophy course often becomes the only opportunity to rise to the level of generalizations that touch on fundamental questions of being, cognition, and morality. This contributes to the development of a stable system of values and beliefs, which is especially important in modern society with its pluralism and complexity of moral choices.

Secondly, philosophy lays the foundations for understanding the methods of scientific knowledge, the structure and logic of science. Through the study of logic, epistemology, and the philosophy of science, students master the skills of correct reasoning, analysis of arguments, and identification of the foundations of knowledge. These skills constitute a universal scientific methodological apparatus necessary for any professional. For example, through the philosophy of science, future scientists and engineers learn about the principles of scientific theory, criteria of truth, and ethical norms of scientific research. Future doctors learn the basics of bioethics and the relationship between science and humanism in medicine. According to researchers, the importance of the methodological function of philosophical knowledge in the work of a doctor cannot be overestimated: it is philosophy that forms the methodological basis of thinking, developing general logical skills of analysis, synthesis, and the ability to draw conclusions. It is no coincidence that the section 'Philosophy of Science' is included in the course for medical postgraduates – it is believed that it contributes to improving the quality of scientific work and the conscious application of a scientific approach in medicine. More generally, in any science, philosophy plays the role of reflection on its foundations, thereby increasing the meaningfulness of professional training.

Thirdly, through philosophy, education fulfils the task of raising morally responsible and civically mature individuals. The classical sections of ethics, socio-political philosophy, and philosophy of law introduce students to the basic values of society, different approaches to understanding good and justice, the meaning of life, and the just structure of the state. This shapes the moral compass of future specialists and their willingness to bear social responsibility for the results of their activities. Philosophy is particularly important for fields associated with increased moral responsibility, such as medicine, biology, and engineering, whose work touches on ethical issues (questions of life and death, environmental responsibility, the use of technology, etc.). In today's high-tech civilization, philosophy in higher education is becoming the channel through which reflections on the ethical limits of the application of knowledge are introduced into professional consciousness. The expansion of discussions on bioethics and professional ethics in medicine confirms the increased role of the philosophical component in the training of specialists: many acute issues (euthanasia, abortion, genetic engineering, etc.) require precisely a philosophical understanding of values, and not just technical knowledge. Moreover, philosophy teaches a dialogical attitude towards other people's opinions and tolerance for alternative views, which is the basis of academic culture and democracy in society.

Fourth, philosophy, like no other discipline, develops critical thinking in students, the ability to question established dogmas, analyze arguments, and identify logical errors. Through reading and analyzing difficult philosophical texts, participating in seminar discussions, and writing essays on abstract topics, students train their intellectual abilities – abstraction, reflection, and argumentation. According to a number of studies, studying philosophy statistically significantly improves students' critical thinking and analytical skills [37]. For example, it has been found that graduates who have taken courses in logic or philosophy perform better on graduate school entrance exams and other tests that require verbal and analytical thinking [38]. In addition, they demonstrate higher results

in ethical reasoning, which indicates the development of complex evaluative thinking skills [39]. These data refute the stereotype about the “uselessness” of philosophy: on the contrary, even from a utilitarian point of view, philosophy develops the meta-skills in future specialists that are highly valued by employers in the 21st century—the ability to solve non-standard problems, think critically, learn throughout life, and adapt to new situations.

Finally, fifthly, philosophy contributes to the development of independent thinking and the inner culture of the student's personality. Familiarity with a variety of philosophical ideas fosters tolerance, develops intellectual curiosity, and stimulates self-knowledge. It is no coincidence that Plato and Aristotle considered philosophy to be the most important means of cultivating the virtues of the mind for the harmonious development of the individual and society. Contemporary philosophers also write about the educational significance of philosophy: for example, J. Morton notes that philosophy teaches clear thinking and is “an antidote to uncritical acceptance of reality” [40]. For students, immersion in philosophical reflection is a chance to go beyond the narrow subject paradigm and look at themselves and the world more broadly, which supports the development of qualities such as openness to new experiences, skepticism toward unconfirmed statements, and a willingness to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of their activities. All of this is an important component of the general cultural education of a university graduate, increasing their civic maturity and inner freedom.

Thus, the results of theoretical analysis confirm that philosophy in modern higher education performs a whole range of important functions that cannot be fully replaced by other disciplines. It is this versatility – from shaping worldviews to training logic – that makes philosophy a unique component of university education. In this sense, it can be said that philosophy contributes to the harmonization of specialist training, combining the development of professional competencies with the cultivation of general cultural and supra-professional qualities.

From a scientific and pedagogical point of view, it is interesting to compare the situation in Russia with the teaching of philosophy in universities with the experience of other countries. For the sake of originality and clarity of comparison, this study chose the example of the United States of America, a country with a different educational tradition and organization of educational programs. The results of the comparison showed that the role and place of philosophy in US and Russian universities differ significantly at the formal level, but in terms of content, there are points of contact and similar problems.

In Russia, as noted, philosophy is included in the list of compulsory subjects for all students, which is ensured at the state level by educational standards. In this way, the state guarantees a minimum level of philosophical literacy for every graduate. In the US, there are no federal educational standards requiring all students to study philosophy—curricula are determined by universities independently. Nevertheless, most American colleges and universities have a General Education (Gen Ed) system—general educational requirements that every student must fulfill in addition to courses in their major. These requirements usually include several courses from different fields of knowledge (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, etc.). Philosophy as a separate course is not strictly mandatory everywhere, but it is often included in the list of options to satisfy the humanities or social sciences component of Gen Ed. For example, students can choose between a course in history, literature, philosophy, or ethics to fulfill the humanities requirement. According to statistics, although the percentage of students specializing in philosophy in the United States is small and tends to decline, a significant number of students still take at least one philosophy course as part of their minimum educational requirements. In addition, many American universities aim to develop students' “critical thinking and analytical skills” and “ethical thinking skills” – these competencies are officially stated among the target outcomes of General Education [41]. It is significant that philosophy as an academic discipline is directly focused on developing these skills. This recognition at the institutional level creates a niche for philosophy courses: even against the backdrop of a general decline in the number of philosophy majors, the proportion of philosophers engaged in teaching in American higher education is not decreasing, which is largely due to their involvement in teaching general education courses.

In other words, in practice, philosophy plays a significant role in the education of American students, although this is achieved by other means (not through centralized state standards, as in Russia, but through institutional requirements of universities or colleges). It is worth noting that a number of educational institutions in the US independently introduce compulsory courses in

philosophy/ethics for all students, based on their educational mission. For example, at some Catholic universities, students must take a course in philosophical anthropology or ethics, and engineering schools are increasingly introducing compulsory modules on ethics in science and technology. Thus, it can be stated that both Russia and the US understand the importance of philosophy for comprehensive education, but they implement this understanding in different ways. Russia ensures this administratively through standards, while the US does so through the tradition of “free education” and the internal policies of universities.

The comparison also revealed common problems and trends. For example, in Russia and the US, philosophy departments face the fact that students often consider philosophy to be a difficult discipline that is far removed from practical application. In both countries, there has been a decline in young people's interest in pursuing a philosophy education (a decrease in the proportion of philosophy majors in the US and a decline in enrollment in philosophy departments in Russia). This is due to students' pragmatic orientation toward majors that they believe will give them more direct career advantages. As a result, philosophy departments have to justify their existence by proving the value of the courses they offer to a wide range of students. In the American context, this has led to a discussion about including philosophy in Gen Ed as a compulsory element – to guarantee a flow of students to courses and preserve departments. Metcalf directly argues that philosophy courses should be given a more significant place in the general requirements system and even suggests that every student should be required to take at least one philosophy course [15]. In Russia, where formally all students study philosophy anyway, the discussion takes on a different tone: it is not about inclusion, but about substantive modernization and teaching methods. Many Russian authors point out that there is an urgent need to “reboot” university philosophy—to update programs, methods, and forms – otherwise the formal presence of the course will not have a real impact on students' minds [34]. In other words, the problem lies in improving the effectiveness of teaching: how to ensure that the compulsory philosophy course actually fulfills its stated functions (developing thinking, rather than being a formal tribute to tradition).

A comparison with the US suggests some possible solutions. For example, interactive methods of teaching philosophy are widespread in American practice: case methods (analysis of ethical dilemmas from real life), small group discussions, writing argumentative essays, and developing debating skills. All of this is aimed at ensuring that students do not simply memorize the history of philosophical teachings, but learn to philosophize independently, applying the principles of logic and ethics to current issues. In Russia, however, the academic style of presenting material still prevails – the course often boils down to a history of philosophy from antiquity to the present day, with minimal exposure to contemporary worldview or professional-ethical case studies. A shift in emphasis seems to be an important reserve. For example, for students of technical and natural sciences, sections on the philosophy of science and technology and the ethical aspects of scientific and technological progress could be strengthened to show the direct connection between philosophy and their future activities. For future medical professionals, more attention should be paid to bioethics and philosophical questions of life and death, which are directly related to medical practice. Such a practice-oriented approach can increase interest: students will see that philosophy is not detached from reality, but helps to understand the real problems of today.

Another aspect is the integration of philosophy with other disciplines. International experts (for example, in UNESCO reports) emphasize that philosophy should not be isolated in the curriculum; on the contrary, it is optimal to permeate the study of other subjects with it [1]. This refers to an interdisciplinary approach: the inclusion of philosophical modules in courses on economics (business ethics), ecology (philosophy of sustainable development), computer science (information, consciousness, AI ethics), etc. Elements of this approach are present in the US – for example, courses on “Ethics in Engineering” can be taught jointly by philosophers and engineers, or the course “Philosophy of Mind” attracts students of cognitive sciences [42]. In Russia, such innovations are only just beginning to emerge, but there are examples: some universities offer courses such as “Philosophy and Methodology of Economics” for economists [38], “Ethical Foundations of Biotechnology” for biologists [38], and so on. Integration enhances students' perception of the usefulness of philosophy and also helps them to gain a deeper understanding of the professional discipline itself, laying the foundation for the ability to see its conceptual foundations.

It is worth noting a problem that is relevant to both countries: the assessment of the results of philosophy education. Critics of philosophy in the curriculum sometimes point out that the effect of

studying it is difficult to measure quantitatively (unlike, for example, the acquisition of programming skills or knowledge of a foreign language). However, new research, including the use of quantitative methods, provides counterarguments: measurable improvements in critical thinking tests, moral judgment, and even academic performance confirm the effectiveness of philosophical training. More subtle effects – such as increased curiosity and openness to new experiences – have also been studied and, as questionnaires show, correlate positively with the study of philosophy. In this regard, Russian education should adopt the global experience of conducting pedagogical measurements of the effectiveness of humanities courses in order to more clearly demonstrate their contribution. This would help justify the preservation (and possibly expansion) of philosophy in curricula based on evidence that is understandable to university administrators and specialists from the Russian Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

To sum up the comparative analysis, we can say that despite institutional differences, the Russian and American systems agree on the importance of philosophical education, but implement it in different ways. The Russian experience is characterized by universality, but at the same time formalism; while the American experience is characterized by variability, but with a cultural tradition that supports philosophy through the values of liberal education. Both systems face the challenge of adapting philosophy to the needs of the 21st century, whether it be the demand for critical thinking skills or ethical understanding of technology. The experience of each country can be useful to the other: Russia in terms of the diversity of teaching methods and the integration of philosophy into an interdisciplinary context, and the US in terms of the comprehensive coverage of students by the philosophical component and state and political support for the fundamental sciences. Such a dialogue can enrich the global practice of teaching philosophy in higher education.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained confirm the main theses put forward by both Russian and foreign authors, but at the same time expand and specify these theses, placing them in a comparative perspective.

First of all, the global trend of crisis and the need to justify philosophy in universities is confirmed. Our analysis of the situation in Russia (reduction of hours, formal attitude, decline in status) finds parallels in foreign works, which describe the “threat” to philosophy departments and disciplines [43]. The reasons are similar everywhere: a utilitarian shift in education, labor market demands, and students' focus on quickly marketable skills. Thus, the conclusion that philosophy is now forced to fight for its place is fully consistent with the conclusions of Western researchers [43]. At the same time, our work emphasizes that the situation in Russia has its own peculiarities: despite the crisis, philosophy still maintains a formal presence in curricula thanks to the inertia of state education policy. In the US, where there is no such normative consolidation, the “displacement” of philosophy is more direct – through the reduction of specializations and the closure of departments. This difference is interesting from a scientific point of view: it shows that models of including philosophy may vary, but under conditions of value pressure, the results (a reduction in the actual role) are similar. Perhaps it was precisely the commonality of the challenge that gave rise to similar concerns among scholars in different countries, as evidenced by numerous publications devoted to the “crisis of philosophy” and the search for ways to overcome it [44]. Our analysis complements this literature by simultaneously considering both the external (structural) manifestations of the crisis and the internal (substantive and methodological) causes, as well as offering a broader view of the problem through the prism of comparative experience.

Furthermore, the results of the study reinforce and justify the value of philosophy, which is defended by many educational theorists [45]. We have not only listed the functions of philosophy, but also provided concrete evidence of their feasibility. In particular, the functions and effects we have identified (development of critical thinking, moral education, methodological training) are consistent with the arguments presented in the world literature [46]. Thus, the thesis that philosophy cultivates valuable intellectual skills has long been put forward theoretically and historically [6]. Our work has provided contemporary data that gives this thesis empirical support. Thus, the scientific discussion shifts from abstract statements to the plane of evidence. For example, Western authors pointed to the lack of previously “solid” empirical evidence of the benefits of philosophy, which gave skeptics reason to argue that there was no certainty that philosophy developed thinking more than other

disciplines. However, works published in the 2020s [20] fill this gap by demonstrating the statistically significant effect of studying philosophy. Our analysis has incorporated this new data into the general context, emphasizing that yes, philosophy does indeed make a unique contribution, because the combination of developed verbal-logical abilities and breadth of vision is best formed through philosophical education.

Comparing the results with the concepts of other authors also allows us to clarify the role of philosophy in shaping the competencies of the future. Our research has in fact shown that philosophy is one of the most effective tools for developing these qualities. This is in line with the conclusions of Western experts who urge us not to relegate philosophy and the humanities to the background, but rather to integrate them into the training of specialists for the new era [47]. As for the debate on the methods and place of philosophy, our study offers some controversial conclusions. In particular, in the Russian context, it is often argued that since philosophy is taught to everyone anyway, the problem of its relevance is exaggerated. However, we show that formal obligation is not synonymous with actual significance. Survey results and classroom observations indicate that students take a formal approach to the discipline, are poorly engaged, and do not understand its goals. Here we can refer to the point of view of V.N. Porus, who wrote about the "crisis of university philosophy" – in fact, about the gap between the declared goals and the real state of affairs [48]. Our data (for example, only a quarter of student teachers consider philosophy to be the most useful subject, despite its potential) confirm the existence of such a gap. In the discussion, it is important to emphasize that the problem is not with philosophy itself, but with the way it is presented. Some foreign critics have noted that students resist compulsory courses that they do not consider useful, and this is also true for philosophy [27]. It follows that either perceptions or methods (or preferably both) need to be changed. In this regard, it is particularly valuable to refer to foreign experience: confirming Lobanova's conclusions about the need for innovation in teaching philosophy, we have supported them with examples of American practices (discussion methods, case studies, interdisciplinary modules) [49].

Any research cannot do without considering opposing views. In the course of our work, we took into account some critical arguments. One of them is the thesis that the main vehicle of critical thinking is not only philosophy, but also other disciplines, such as the natural sciences, which train logical thinking just as well. We analyzed this issue and came to the conclusion that although elements of a critical approach are present everywhere, philosophy emphasizes the principles of thinking and reflection on methods of cognition, which is not explicitly present in other subjects. Therefore, philosophy rather complements and enhances the effect of specialized disciplines. Moreover, according to a 2025 study, philosophy students, even taking into account their initial predisposition, perform better than students of any other specialty in logical thinking tests. This is evidence in favor of the uniqueness of the effect. Another counterargument is that philosophy is too abstract and does not prepare students for a specific profession. Our study, looking at Russian and foreign experience, shows that philosophy should not prepare students directly for a profession – it has a different task. But this task directly affects the quality of the professional. For example, an engineer who does not understand the ethical implications of their decisions or a doctor who lacks moral reasoning skills can become a source of problems, whereas philosophical training provides basic guidelines for responsibility. Here we rely on the concept of "education for sustainable development," which emphasizes the cultivation of values and critical thinking on a par with professional skills [50]. Philosophy is precisely the bearer of the value component.

When discussing the results, it is impossible not to note the positive examples that emerged from the comparative analysis. A number of Russian universities are taking innovative steps: English-language courses in philosophy are being created to attract foreign students, electronic interactive aids are being used, and special courses on "Philosophy in Professional Activity [in a Specific Field]" are being introduced [34]. These local initiatives are consistent with our proposals for integration and make the findings of the study practically relevant. The international experience reviewed in the comparison confirms the viability of the idea of expanding the philosophical component. It is interesting to note that a certain "renaissance" of interest in philosophy can be observed at the intersection with the IT sphere: the ethics of artificial intelligence and the philosophy of consciousness are once again attracting attention, and this is a field where philosophers are in demand. Our study fits this observation into the general context: in order to take advantage of these opportunities, the education system needs to provide adequate training – to produce specialists who can conduct philosophical analysis of new problems.

To sum up the discussion, we note that the results of our study are in line with contemporary scientific ideas about the role of philosophy in education, supplementing them with specifics and comparative measurements. They place local (Russian) problems in the broad context of global educational discourse. This allows us to make informed judgments about which changes are specific to a particular context and which reflect a global trend. For example, the reduction in teaching hours is a specific case of the global trend toward utilitarianism; the need to integrate philosophy is a global idea adopted by UNESCO but implemented differently at the local level.

CONCLUSION

The analysis confirms that philosophy remains a key element of modern university education. Its contribution is not limited to providing a "humanities accompaniment" to professional training: the course provides a worldview, methodological, and value framework, develops critical thinking and other universal competencies, and these effects are supported by current research and teaching practices. In the context of accelerating techno-social change, it is philosophy that helps students connect knowledge from different fields and make responsible decisions.

The Russian model offers the unique advantage of comprehensiveness: philosophy is institutionally present in all programs, which guarantees a minimum level of philosophical literacy among graduates. At the same time, factors have been identified that reduce the real impact of the course: reduced classroom time, overload with historical and philosophical material, and a lack of practical focus and motivation. This necessitates targeted modernization – updating the content and forms of teaching without losing the conceptual core of the discipline.

A comparison with practices in the United States shows an alternative way of integrating philosophy into the educational trajectory – through General Education requirements and institutional decisions by the universities themselves. Despite the difference in mechanisms (administrative obligation in the Russian Federation and variable obligation through Gen Ed in the United States), the goals are similar: the development of critical and ethical thinking, communication, and analytical skills. A combined model seems optimal, combining the guaranteed presence of philosophy with variability and interactive formats that make the course personally meaningful and professionally relevant.

It is already possible to outline the practical contours of the necessary changes. This involves shifting the emphasis from an encyclopedic overview to the student's intellectual activity: case discussions and debates, argumentative essays, interdisciplinary group projects; adapting topics to the training profile (technology ethics for engineers and doctors, philosophy of science for natural sciences, issues of sustainable development and media literacy for a wide audience); built-in mechanisms for assessing learning outcomes. For the training of scientific personnel, it is important to update the exam program in the history and philosophy of science so that it becomes a stage for reflection on methodology rather than a formal "barrier." Finally, it is strategically important to provide institutional support for philosophy courses and teaching infrastructure, especially at the intersection with IT and high technology, where the demand for ethical and conceptual expertise is growing steadily.

Thus, further reduction of philosophy in universities would be a mistake. It would be much more productive to leverage the strengths of Russian comprehensiveness, enriching them with modern methods and interdisciplinary integration. In this configuration, philosophy fulfills its university mission – it shapes thinking, responsible, and free specialists who are able to navigate the complex realities of the 21st century.

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