

Philosophy Retreat

FOR BUSINESS EXECUTIVES





Explore big ideas. Expand your horizons. Look at work, life, innovation and leadership in new ways.

All of this in exquisite surroundings. The Philosophy Retreat for Business Executives has been designed to cultivate the big-picture thinking and creative reasoning needed to navigate an increasingly complex and disrupted business environment.

Political and economic uncertainty, global interconnectedness, rapid advances in information and biotechnology and major ecological shifts call for higher-order thinking and decision-making skills in business. These have to transcend the traditional grounding in finance, marketing, strategy and operations.

The Philosophy Retreat is a joint venture between the Philosophy Department of Stellenbosch University and the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB), in keeping with the growing international trend of improving business decisions through philosophical reflection. Unlike the usual outward-bound executive course, the Retreat offers an intellectual adventure for those who want to grapple with big ideas and unsettling questions.

The two-day experience takes place at the historic Boschendal Estate in the Cape Winelands. Participants can expect diverse presentations ranging from brief talks to interactive sessions. Content is presented by thought leaders from the Philosophy Department and the Business School. No prior knowledge of philosophy is required.

There will be no pre-packaged answers, but rather a great deal of open-ended exploration and reflection.

**We offer an adventure of the mind
that is removed from the office,
but relevant for the office.**

Expect to discover new ways of thinking that will inspire new ways of doing.

Breathtaking natural scenery, culinary delights and stimulating intellectual content will engage both the mind and the senses.





Programme topics include:

Thinking about thinking

How do unexamined mental models, concepts and values shape our thinking? How can deep-seated assumptions lead us astray, and how can we learn to reason better? What is the value of critical thinking for real-world decision-making?

Thinking about business and the economy

What are the assumptions on which we base our understanding of economic systems, business and government policy? Can these assumptions be trusted? How do we know this? Can we do better?

Thinking about artificial intelligence

Can machines think, or learn to think? What would it take for us to be able to answer this question? Are we there yet? Should we worry about the machine future?



Thinking about choices

What happens when we choose to do one thing rather than another? Are our choices the inevitable outcome of preceding causes, or are we free to choose differently? Can we know for sure, and does it matter?

Thinking about the good life

What matters to us in life, and what should we aim for? What makes our lives worth living? Is there more to the good life than happiness or success?

Thinking about justice

It is easy to say that South Africa is an unjust society, but what is the nature of this injustice? What would a just society look like, and is it achievable?

Thinking about climate change

What does climate change have to do with our attitude towards nature? How should we think about the role of business, science and technology in combating ecological disaster?



Programme overview

Friday, 1 November 2019

- Check-in at Boschendal from 14h00
- Welcome and introductory session at an exclusive wine-tasting in the Manor House
- Friday Night Market at Boschendal
- After-dinner conversation around the fire-pit

Saturday, 2 November 2019

- Early morning mountain biking, hiking, or horse riding
- Retreat programme and partners' social programme
- Gala dinner with guest speaker
- After-dinner conversation around the fire-pit

Sunday, 3 November 2019

- Early morning mountain biking, hiking, or horse riding
- Themed conversation over breakfast and closure
- Jazz Lunch at the Werf Restaurant (optional)



Presenters: Philosophy Retreat

Johan Hattingh

Professor of Philosophy and Head of the Unit of Environmental Ethics in the Centre for Applied Ethics
Environmental ethics, sustainable development, philosophy of art and culture, critical social theory

Daniel Malan

Programme Director and Director of the Centre for Corporate Governance in Africa
Business ethics and governance

Phila Msimang

Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy
Philosophy of science, theories of cognition, biological and social theories of race

Piet Naudé

Director of the University of Stellenbosch Business School
Ethics related to politics, economics and business

Stan du Plessis

Professor of Economics and Chief Operating Officer of Stellenbosch University
Macroeconomics and monetary economics, performance of government, law and economics, economic history

Vasti Roodt

Associate Professor of Philosophy and Head of the Unit for Social and Political Ethics in the Centre for Applied Ethics
Political philosophy, moral philosophy, theories of justice

J.P. Smit

Associate Professor of Philosophy
Philosophy of economics, philosophy of language, social ontology

Anton van Niekerk

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Head of the Unit for Bioethics and Director of the Centre for Applied Ethics
Bioethics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of the human sciences

Minka Woermann

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy and Head of the Unit for Business Ethics and Public Integrity in the Centre for Applied Ethics
Post-structural (French) philosophy, critical complexity theory, business ethics



Booking and fees

The Retreat is restricted to 18 delegates. Luxury private accommodation in cottages on the Estate is available for all to enjoy.

The all-inclusive fee of **R30 000** covers accommodation and meals for two people, enabling each delegate to bring along a partner / spouse.

The fee includes:

- Accommodation for up to two children aged between 4 and 14*
- A social programme for partners (e.g. spa treatment or wine tasting) is included, but they are welcome to attend any of the philosophy sessions
- Mountain biking, hiking or horse riding (guide included)
- Point-to-point transfers from Cape Town International Airport or any destination in the greater Cape Town area

* Children stay for free, but meals and the Tree House programme will be billed separately. See Boschendal website for more detail: www.boschendal.com

For further information and bookings:

Visit: www.usb.ac.za/usb_events/philosophy-retreat

Email: philosophyretreat@sun.ac.za.

Alternatively, please contact Philosophy Department at 021 808 2418, or the Business School at 021 918 4342.