

PHILOSOPHY, M.A.

Degree Requirements (30 Hours)

Students in the M.A. program may elect either the thesis or non-thesis option.

Course Requirements

Students in the M.A. program may elect either the thesis or non-thesis option. Students in the M.A. program who choose to write a thesis are required to take eight graduate philosophy courses (24 non-thesis semester hours), at least four of which must be at the 700-level taken in face-to-face format. An additional 6 semester hours of PHIL 799 are also required. Without a thesis, eleven courses (33 non-thesis semester hours) are required, at least 6 of which must be at the 700-level taken in face-to-face format.

Logic Requirement

Successful completion of PHIL 511, taken either as an upper-level undergraduate course or as part of the graduate program, is required of all M.A. students.

History Requirement

Successful completion of at least two upper-level history-of-philosophy courses is required of all M.A. students: at least one from Ancient to Renaissance Philosophy, and at least one from Early to Late Modern Philosophy.

Ancient to Renaissance Philosophy

Course	Title	Credits
PHIL 505	Plato	3
PHIL 506	Aristotle	3
PHIL 526	Hellenistic Philosophy	3
PHIL 701	Studies in Ancient Philosophy	3
PHIL 507	Medieval Philosophy	3
PHIL 540	Renaissance Philosophy	3

Early to Late Modern Philosophy

Course	Title	Credits
PHIL 501	British Empiricism	3
PHIL 502	Continental Rationalism	3
PHIL 508	Hume	3
PHIL 509	Kant	3
PHIL 723	Hegel	3
PHIL 705	Studies in 17th- and 18th-Century Philosophy	3
PHIL 707	Studies in 19th-Century Philosophy	3
PHIL 709	Studies in 20th-Century Philosophy	3
PHIL 503	Analytic Philosophy	3
PHIL 721	Pragmatism	3
PHIL 504	Phenomenology and Existentialism	3
PHIL 534	Contemporary European Social Philosophy	3
PHIL 706	Studies in Continental Philosophy	3

Language Requirement

A reading knowledge of one foreign language is required of all M.A. students. The Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures administers tests of foreign language competency.

Comprehensive Examination

The MA Comprehensive Exam is a written exam consisting of a revised version of one of the student's first-year papers or a similarly-high-quality paper on an approved topic of interest to the student. This paper will be assessed by two faculty members, to be designated by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the student and possible examiners. Normally the paper will be written under the supervision of at least one of the examiners.

The MA comprehensive exam is intended to demonstrate mastery of the skills required for basic philosophical writing. These include the ability to articulate and defend a thesis on the basis of argument and textual interpretation. The standards for assessing the MA exam lie between the standards for evaluating undergraduate work and PhD-level work. While the MA comprehensive exam assesses many of the same skills involved in undergraduate writing, the exam holds students to a high standard, because it requires mastery of these skills. On the other hand, the MA comprehensive exam is less demanding than the PhD comprehensive exam, because the former does not require students to make an original contribution to the literature and, consequently, does not require the level of research needed to show that such a standard has been met. Rather, the extent of research involved in the MA comprehensive exam is variable and depends upon the paper topic and the judgment of the faculty advisor.

These papers will vary in length (15 to 30 pages, 12pt, double-spaced, etc.). A final version must be submitted to the examiners and to the Director of Graduate Studies by August 15 prior to the beginning of the student's second year in the program.

These papers are graded "pass" or "fail." The result will be reported to the Graduate Director and to the student within ten days of the examiners' receipt of the paper. A student whose August 15 paper does not pass may resubmit a revised version at most once anytime before the following January 16. The result of that second assessment will determine whether the student passes or fails the MA Comprehensive Exam.

Thesis Option

Students who choose the thesis option must also write a master's thesis. The thesis topic should be chosen in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and a member of the Graduate Faculty. The latter will act as thesis director and first reader. Another member of the faculty, appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies, will act as second reader. A thesis proposal approved by the two readers should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies, normally within sixty days of the date on which the M.A. Comprehensive Examination is passed. The proposal should be several pages in length, outlining the topic and argumentative structure of the proposed thesis. It should include a title, and be accompanied by a fairly substantial bibliography.

Theses vary in length, but are typically about 15,000 words long (60 pages, double-spaced). Normally a thesis goes through a number of drafts before it is approved. A final draft of the thesis must be submitted to the two readers for their approval at least five weeks before the end of the term in which the student plans to graduate.