PHILOSOPHY, M.A.

The Department of Philosophy offers work leading to the doctor of philosophy with a major in philosophy.

The M.A. is granted to Ph.D. program students when they pass their preliminary examinations and become a dissertator. When a student must leave the program early and is unable to complete a Ph.D., a terminal M.A. is granted upon satisfying the department’s criteria for a master’s degree.

The Ph.D. degree is awarded in recognition of a successfully completed program of advanced studies in philosophy, culminating in a dissertation which represents a contribution to philosophy or to philosophical scholarship.

The Ph.D. program falls into two major stages. The first consists of work that prepares the student for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. Studies during the first stage of the program are devoted to acquiring the philosophical skills and learning needed to do philosophy in the second stage when writing a successful dissertation.

The department offers five years of support to all incoming graduate students. Support begins with the first fall semester and continues for at least nine additional semesters, provided the student makes satisfactory academic progress and carries out duties acceptably as a graduate assistant.

The department assigns a faculty member as placement officer and devotes a significant portion of staff resources to help graduates find employment.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.A.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

33 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

21 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

30 credits must be in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 9 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

No credits from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 9 credits of coursework numbered 500 or above taken as a UW–Madison Special student. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

12 credits

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED

At least 21 credits must be earned in philosophy courses numbered between 800 and 989. The remaining credits may be earned either by transferring credits from graduate-level work (with a maximum of 9 credits) or by taking courses at the 400–900 level.

No more than one course at the 400–600 level nor more than one course at the 700 level can count toward the credit-hour requirements for the M.A.

Typically, students take 10 seminars at the 800–900 level and one 700-level seminar to satisfy this requirement.

No more than one 701 course can count toward the 33-credit-hour requirement for the M.A.

Contact the program for information on any additional required courses.

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT

3.00

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate School requires an average grade of B or better in all coursework (300 or above, not including research credits) taken as a graduate student unless conditions for probationary status require higher grades. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

PROBATION POLICY

The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.
ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects them to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

An advisor generally serves as the thesis advisor. In many cases, an advisor is assigned to incoming students. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Contact the program for information on required assessments and examinations.

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Master’s degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

ADMISSIONS

The Graduate School sets minimum requirements for admissions (https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions/requirements). Academic program admission requirements are often more rigorous than those set by the Graduate School. Please check the program website (http://philosophy.wisc.edu/graduate/apply.php) for details.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

• Expert ability to think critically about arguments.
• Expert ability to interpret complex texts accurately and analyze them logically.
• Ability to communicate very precisely and concisely in both writing and in speech.
• In-depth familiarity with the history of Western philosophy and the major debates within that tradition.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

• Interpretative charity, and intellectual honesty, which includes appropriate attribution to others of their ideas, and recognition and frankness about the limitations of one's own ideas.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Shafer-Landau (chair), Brighouse, Card, Forster, Gottlieb, Hausman, Hunt, Nadler, Shapiro, Sidelle, Sober, Vrana;

Associate Professor Streiffer; Assistant Professors Bengson, Mackay, Masrour, Paul, Schechtman, Titelbaum