Philosophy, Ph.D.

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.

FUNDING

Prospective students should see the program website (http://philosophy.wisc.edu/graduate/financial_aid.php) for funding information.

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.

DOCTORAL DEGREES

Ph.D.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

51 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

32 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

All 51 credits except for 3 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).

- For students seeking a dual Ph.D./J.D., 42 of 51 credits must be in graduate-level coursework.

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 ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral 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 ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

Pre-dissertator status: 12 credits
Dissertator status: 3 credits
Dual Ph.D./J.D. students: 15 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 previous graduate-level work or by taking courses at the 400–900 level.

No more than one course at the 400–600 level nor more than two courses at the 700 level can count toward the credit-hour requirements for the Ph.D.

Typically, students take 10 seminars at the 800–900 level, two 700-level seminars, and earn the remainder of the credits by taking directed research or thesis-prep courses (e.g., PHIL 990).

In other words, the course requirements for the Ph.D. involve (a) completing the requirements for the M.A., (b) taking additional courses to reach a minimum of 51 credit hours, and (c) taking an additional seminar (700–989) at some point between the M.A. and completing the Ph.D., as part of the 51 credits.

Seminar requirement: at least 12 courses at the 500 level or above; at least 10 of these must be at the 800 or 900 level, and an additional course must be at the 700–900 level courses must be passed with a grade of B or better, except for 701, which requires a grade of S.

Ordinarily, students take at least three graduate seminars (900 level) in the major area, two history seminars, the First Year Proseminar, and three seminars in other areas of philosophy. In addition, students typically take
a reading seminar (701) before advancing to candidacy. At least 9 of the 12 courses must be taken in the UW–Madison program.

History of philosophy requirement: Two of the 12 required seminars must be advanced history of philosophy courses.

No more than two courses from a previous program can be applied toward the seminar requirement.

Reading seminars: Each seminar meets with a concurrently offered reading seminar (701). Students attend all the seminar meetings and do the readings, but have a substantially lighter workload, determined by the professor before the beginning of the semester. Students may take as many 701’s as they like; however, only two 701’s can count toward the seminar requirement for the Ph.D. No more than two 701’s can be applied to the 51-credit-hour requirement for the Ph.D.

Contact the program for information on any additional required courses.

DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS
Doctoral students must complete a doctoral minor.

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
Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies. 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.

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.

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

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS
Doctoral students are required to take a comprehensive preliminary/oral examination after they have cleared their record of all Incomplete and Progress grades (other than research and thesis). Deposit of the doctoral dissertation in the Graduate School is required.

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Doctoral degree students who have been absent for ten 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; coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may by require to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

ADMISSIONS
For admission to the Ph.D. program with full graduate standing, a student must have completed the equivalent of a B.A. with a major in philosophy. Promising students who do not meet this requirement may be admitted with deficiencies provided that they have completed at least 12 credits in philosophy. Upon entering the program, a student must consult with the assistant to the chair for selection of a major professor. The department website (http://philosophy.wisc.edu/graduate) contains additional information on department rules, policies, and degree requirements.

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 design curriculum for undergraduate courses in their areas of expertise and competence.
- 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.
- Ability to write a book length manuscript which constitutes an original and valuable contribution to the field.

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.
- Fosters ethical and professional conduct.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING GOALS
- Ability to engage in high quality undergraduate instruction in their areas of expertise and competence.
- Well-equipped to pursue continuous professional development with respect to goals.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Shafer-Landau (chair), Brighouse, Card, Forster, Gottlieb, Hausman, Hunt, Nadler, Shapiro, Sidelle, Sober, Vranas; Associate Professor Streiffer; Assistant Professors Bengson, Mackay, Masrour, Paul, Schechtman, Titelbaum