

# UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

College of Arts and Sciences

## **Syllabus for the Graduate Programs in Philosophy**

(Effective for students entering Fall 2005 and later)

Listed below are the requirements and procedures in the degree programs offered by the Department of Philosophy. These are in addition to the general requirements of the Graduate College that are found on the Graduate College webpage:

<http://gradweb.ou.edu/>

### **I. General Information**

All required courses (e.g., required courses in symbolic logic) must be passed with a grade of "B" or better.

### **II. The M.A. Degree in Philosophy**

Any student who wishes to receive an M.A. degree in Philosophy from OU but who does not intend to continue in the department's Ph.D. program should apply to the M.A. program. The M.A. program has both a thesis option and an exam option.

#### **a. Thesis option**

1. This program consists of thirty hours of graduate work, up to four hours of which may be thesis research. Up to eight hours may be transferred from other institutions or taken in other departments. Credit hours taken in other departments must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Credit hours transferred from another institution must be approved by both the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate College. Normally, a maximum of three hours of Independent Study (Philosophy 5990) will be allowed in this program.
2. All students must pass Symbolic Logic I or equivalent.
3. M.A. students are advised by the Director of Graduate Studies. Toward the end of the first year, students doing the thesis option should consult with the graduate director concerning the selection of topics and committees for their theses. The degree is awarded upon the

student's completing all required coursework, submitting an acceptable thesis, and passing an oral examination on the thesis.

**b. Exam option**

1. This degree requires thirty-six hours of coursework, including Symbolic Logic I or equivalent and a graduate course in the history of philosophy. Up to eight hours may be transferred from other institutions or taken in other departments. Credit hours taken in other departments must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Credit hours transferred from another institution must be approved by both the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate College. Normally, a maximum of three hours of Independent Study (Philosophy 5990) will be allowed in this program.
2. In addition to the thirty-six hours of coursework, students enrolled in the non-thesis program must take a written comprehensive examination as stipulated by the Graduate College. The examination will be *in situ* without notes. The date of the exam will be set by the department. The examination covers the work (fields, not courses) offered for the degree and will have the following format:
  - a. A two-hour test over one of the following three areas in the history of philosophy: (1) ancient philosophy, (2) medieval philosophy, or (3) modern philosophy.
  - b. A two-hour test over one of the following two areas of philosophy: (1) ethics, or (2) metaphysics and epistemology.

Students in the M.A. program are advised by the Director of Graduate Studies. A student doing the exam option should consult with the Graduate Director the semester before he or she intends to take the exam. The Graduate Director will appoint a Comprehensive Examination committee composed as follows: a faculty member whose area of expertise includes the history area chosen by the student for the first two-hour test, a faculty member whose area of expertise includes the contemporary area chosen by the student for the second two-hour test, and a third member chosen from the Graduate Studies Committee, normally the Director of Graduate Studies. The first individual will be responsible for the preparation of the history exam, the second individual will be responsible for the preparation of the contemporary exam, and the third individual will serve as Chair of the exam committee whose special responsibility is to maintain

consistency with past exams. At least one week prior to the exam date a draft of each exam will be circulated among the members of the exam committee for approval. Copies of previous examinations are available to the student in the department office. The student is also encouraged to discuss preparation procedures with the members of the committee.

Within one week following the completion of the exam, all of the members of the comprehensive exam committee will score the exams and the results will be reported to the Graduate College. Students will be scored on a 'Pass'/'Fail' basis. The exam will be evaluated on the basis of the breadth and depth of the student's understanding of the fields covered by each part of the exam. In general, the student is expected to have an understanding sufficient for teaching these subjects at the undergraduate level. The committee will report its determination to the Director of Graduate Studies who will inform the student in writing of the committee's decision. The student is encouraged to discuss his or her performance with the committee members. Those students receiving a failing grade may be permitted, at the department's option, to take the exam for a second (and final) time. The date of this second exam will be determined at the convenience of both the student and the committee. It may not be taken a third time or taken twice in the same semester.

### **III. The Ph.D. Degree in Philosophy**

Any student who ultimately aims to receive a Ph.D. at OU should apply directly to the Ph.D. program. Students may apply to the program with either a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree. A student in the OU M.A. program who wishes to apply to the Ph.D. program should do so by the semester prior to the semester he or she intends to take the Ph.D. Qualifying exam described below.

1. Each new student should consult with the graduate adviser concerning the appointment of an advisory committee, which consists of four members from the Philosophy Department and one from outside. The student is required to meet with this committee to plan his or her program within a month of its appointment. This meeting should take place by the end of the student's second semester in the Ph.D. program.

2. Each student must take a Ph.D. Qualifying Exam *in situ* without notes to continue in the program. The exam will be given each spring semester. The date of the exam will be set by the department. It will be graded according to the following scale: A = Ph.D. qualified. B = M.A. qualified. C = fail.
  - a. For students who enter the Ph.D. program with a Bachelor's degree and no Master's degree in Philosophy:
    - i. Students who enter the program in the fall must take the exam in their fourth semester and receive a grade of A to continue in the Ph.D. program. In order to qualify to take the exam, a student must have completed 21 credit hours with a GPA of 3.5. A student who does not qualify to take the exam in the fourth semester will no longer be in the Ph.D. program. The student may apply to the M.A. program.
    - ii. Rules for students who enter the program in the spring are the same as for those who enter in the fall (section i) except that they must take the exam in their fifth semester.
    - iii. Students who receive a grade of B on the exam will transfer into the M.A. program and will not continue in the Ph.D. program after receiving the M.A. degree. Should a student receive a grade of C, he or she may not continue in the Ph.D. program. The student may, however, apply to the M.A. program and take the M.A. exam after completing  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total course work and all required course work for the Master's degree. If the M.A. exam is passed, the student will receive the M.A. degree after completing the course work for the Master's. If the M.A. exam is failed, the student will have to leave the program without an M.A.
    - iv. Students who receive an A on the exam will receive the M.A. degree while continuing in the Ph.D. program upon successful completion of 36 credit hours of course work (including all required course work).
  - b. For students who enter the Ph.D. program with a Master's degree in Philosophy:
    - i. Students who enter the program in the fall must take the qualifying exam in their second semester and must receive a grade of A to continue in the Ph.D. program. In order to qualify to take the exam

a student must have completed 9 credit hours of graduate course work with a grade of B or higher on all course work completed at the time of the exam. A student who does not qualify to take the exam in the second semester or who does not receive a grade of A on the exam may not continue in the program.

- ii. Rules for students who enter the program in the spring are the same as for those who enter in the fall (section i) except that they must take the qualifying exam in their third semester.

c. Content and grading of exam

The content of the Ph.D. Qualifying exam will be the same as for the M.A. exam. The exam will be graded as a whole by four faculty members who prepare the exam in addition to the member appointed by the Graduate Studies Committee, normally the Graduate Director.

- 3. This degree requires ninety hours of graduate work, of which thirty-nine may be dissertation research. The number of hours that may be transferred from other programs is determined individually. An M.A. in philosophy from another institution normally transfers thirty hours (all work transferred must be graded "B" or better). Ordinarily, no work in other departments is required for the Ph.D. degree in philosophy, but the advisory committee may recommend such work as a part of the program of individual students. With the approval of the advisory committee, up to twelve hours outside philosophy may be counted toward this degree. (Requests to exceed this limit must be approved by the faculty as a whole.) If a student's advisory committee believes that the student's proposed dissertation topic necessitates competence in one or more foreign languages, the committee may require the student to demonstrate such competence before beginning work on the dissertation. Normally, a maximum of nine hours of Independent Study (Philosophy 5990) will be allowed in this program.
- 4. The student's coursework counted toward the Ph.D. degree must meet the following set of distribution requirements:
  - a. Symbolic Logic II or the equivalent.

- b. Nine hours in the History of Philosophy, including at least three hours in Ancient Philosophy and three hours in Modern Philosophy.
- c. Nine hours in Ethics, at least six hours of which must be in nonapplied areas of Ethics.
- d. Nine hours in Metaphysics and Epistemology, including at least three hours in each field.

The Graduate Studies Committee, in consultation with the instructor of a given graduate level course, will determine which distribution requirements (if any) a particular course satisfies. A few courses may be used to help satisfy distribution requirements in more than one area; for example, a course on Kant's ethics could be used to satisfy part of the history distribution requirement or else part of the ethics distribution requirement. However, such courses cannot be used to satisfy more than one requirement; in such cases, students must decide which of the two areas they want to have the course counted in.

- 5. Upon recommendation by the student's advisory committee, the student may be invited to take the general examination. Typically the student will have completed the general examination by the end of his or her seventh semester in the department (by the end of the fourth semester for a student entering with an M.A. in Philosophy). Since this examination is a field examination and is not confined to coursework, the student should prepare for it not just through formal coursework but also through private study. Copies of previous examinations are available in the departmental office. The student is also encouraged to meet with the chair (or other members) of his or her Advisory Committee (but especially the chair) for suggested reading and other recommendations for study.
- 6. The general examination consists of a written and oral examination in the student's major area of study; this area must either be (a) one of those on the list below, or else (b) one that is approved by the department as a whole. It should be selected after meeting and discussing the matter with the Advisory Committee. The General Exam must be taken over a four-hour period *in situ* without notes. This does not preclude take-home work following a marginal pass of the examination.

A general examination may be taken over any of the following areas without needing special approval of the department (it may be taken over other areas, but only with official departmental approval): Aesthetics; Epistemology; Ethics; History of Ancient Philosophy; History of Modern Philosophy; Logic; Metaphysics; Philosophy of Education; Philosophy of Language; Philosophy of Law; Philosophy of Logic; Philosophy of Mind; Philosophy of Religion; Philosophy of Science; Philosophy of Social Science; Social Philosophy; Political Philosophy.

The chair of the Advisory Committee is responsible for preparing the exam. He or she will solicit questions and suggestions from the other members of the Advisory Committee (including the outside member) before composing the final draft of the exam.

Following the oral portion of the exam, the Advisory Committee, including the outside member, will meet to evaluate the student's performance. Among the guidelines used in evaluating the exam are facility of written and oral expression, breadth and depth of understanding of the subject matter, familiarity with the relevant primary and secondary literature, and mastery of argumentation. In general, the student is expected to have an understanding sufficient to teach a graduate-level survey course that covers the relevant subject matter. The Advisory Committee may award a pass or a pass conditional on some specified additional work in one area, or it may give a failing grade. Within 72 hours of the oral portion of the General Exam, the chair of the Advisory Committee will submit a written report signed by all members of the committee to the Graduate Dean, indicating whether the student has passed, marginally passed, or failed the examination. The Advisory Committee Chair will inform the student in writing of the committee's decision and encourage the student to discuss his or her performance with the committee chair or other members. If the General Examination is failed, the student may, at the decision of the Advisory Committee, make application to repeat the examination a second and final time in a subsequent semester.

7. After passing the general examination, the student must prepare a dissertation proposal for approval by his or her advisory committee. On

completion of the dissertation, this committee conducts the required defense of the dissertation.

#### **IV. Financial Assistance**

- a. Various forms of assistance are available from the University of Oklahoma Financial Aid Services (1000 Asp, Buchanan Hall, room 216, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019). In addition, the Department of Philosophy offers teaching assistantships, with nine-month stipends (average stipend was \$13,800 in 2010-2011). The graduate assistantship includes a waiver of seven credit hours of in-state tuition and up to nine credit hours of additional tuition paid by nonresidents.
- b. Financial assistance from the department is based primarily on academic merit. All applicants for the Ph.D. program will be automatically considered for an assistantship. Applicants for the M.A. program normally will not be considered for an assistantship, but some students in the M.A. program may be offered aid when available. No application forms are needed. Early financial aid awards (for new students) are determined in early February. To be competitive for these awards all application materials must be received by February 1. Applications for aid received after this date will be considered as aid remains available.
- c. Financial aid is presumed for students in the Ph.D. program until they take the qualifying exam. After successfully passing the qualifying exam, a student in the Ph.D. program will have presumptive aid for three more years. Presumption of financial aid requires satisfactory progress toward the completion of the degree. Satisfactory progress requires:
  - i. completion of a minimum of twelve credit hours per calendar year,
  - ii. maintaining a 3.25 GPA,
  - iii. completion of fifty-one hours exclusive of dissertation hours by the end of the sixth semester (excluding summer semesters), and
  - iv. passing the Ph.D. general exam and having a dissertation prospectus formally approved by the end of the student's eighth semester (excluding summer semesters).
- d. A student who has failed to satisfy any one of these conditions forfeits his/her presumption of continued financial aid. Students who forfeit their



presumption of aid may continue to receive aid only on a competitive basis with other students (both new and continuing).

## **V. Admission**

The application for admission to any of the graduate programs can be found on the University of Oklahoma Office of Admissions webpage (<http://www.ou.edu/admissions/home.html>). Students are, however, encouraged to communicate directly with the Director of Graduate Studies concerning any questions they may have about admission requirements, application procedures, or financial aid. Financial aid is awarded on a competitive basis early each spring for the following fall; thus, applications received by February 1 are encouraged. In addition to the admission requirements of the Graduate College, the department requires: a sample of writing (e.g., an undergraduate essay), three confidential letters of recommendation (preferably, though not necessarily, from undergraduate philosophy teachers), a statement of purpose, GRE scores, and copies of transcripts.

International students for whom English is a second language must submit TOEFL scores (minimum score: 575 if administered in written format; 233 if administered on computer) to be considered for admission.