PHILOSOPHY

http://philosophy.illinois.edu/

Chair of the Department: Kirk Sanders
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Major: Philosophy
Degrees Offered: M.A. and Ph.D.
Graduate Concentration: Medieval Studies (available to all degrees)

Joint Degree Program: Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Philosophy and Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) through the Medical Scholars Program

Graduate Degree Programs

The normal program of graduate study in philosophy is directed toward the Ph.D. The M.A. degree is awarded after completing Stage One. Only under exceptional circumstances and without any commitment of financial aid, students may be allowed to seek only the Master of Arts degree. This happens only rarely. Students seeking solely an M.A. degree are encouraged to apply elsewhere.

Admission

The Graduate College admission requirements apply. Applicants should have had a course in symbolic logic and general courses in the history of ancient and early modern philosophy. Students deficient in these areas may be admitted, but they are required to remedy their deficiencies by taking such courses in their first year. Applicants should also have done some coursework in such central areas of philosophical inquiry as ethics and the theory of knowledge. All applications for admission must be supported by three letters of recommendation from persons qualified to comment on the applicant's aptitude for graduate study in philosophy. All applicants are also required to take the general aptitude portion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and to submit their scores. They are further required to submit a sample of their written work in philosophy (10-20 pages). International applicants whose native language is not English must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and submit their scores; a score of at least 600 on the paper-based test (115 on the computer-based test) is required for regular admission. In addition, these students must demonstrate competence in oral English before they will be allowed to assist as preceptors for the department, as described in the information for teaching assistants.

The deadline for applications is January 1 for admission in the following fall semester. Students are not normally permitted to start the program in the spring semester. For additional information see the department’s information for prospective graduate students.

Language Requirement

Every student must demonstrate competence in one of the four basic philosophical languages (French, German, Latin, or Greek) or else satisfy an alternative requirement (as described below), before advancing to the Third Stage of the program. In the case of French this may be done by passing FR 501 with a grade of B or better or by passing an examination administered by the Department of French. In the case of German this may be done by passing GER 501 with a grade of B or better or by passing an examination administered by the Department of German. In the case of Latin this may be done by passing with a grade of B or better any LAT course at the 300-, 400-, or 500-level. In the case of Greek this may be done by passing with a grade of B or better any GRK course at the 400- or 500-level (with the exception of GRK 403 and GRK 404). Alternatively students may pass a proficiency examination in Latin or Greek administered by the Department of the Classics, the form of which must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

To substitute a language other than one of the basic four, a student must first obtain approval of his or her adviser and of the Graduate Program Committee. Such approval normally will be granted only where the language is directly relevant to the student’s work in philosophy.

The student may petition the Graduate Program Committee to replace the language requirement by an approved program of study in her or his area of research. This petition must include a written justification by the student or the advisor. If written by the student, the justification must be approved by the student’s advisor. This program of study should be deemed more useful to the student’s research than a study of one of the philosophical languages. It may, for example, involve intensive study of specific methods that will greatly enhance the student’s research, such as scientific, mathematical, or statistical methods, or it may involve obtaining crucial knowledge of some field outside of philosophy, such as concentrated studies in law, psychology, or religion.

Medical Scholars Program

Students in the Medical Scholars Program (https://www.med.illinois.edu/mdphd) are expected to fulfill all the degree requirements of both the College of Medicine and the second discipline. At their discretion, some Ph.D. programs allow a limited number of medical school classes (up to 12 hours) to count toward completion of the graduate degree. Faculty advisors from the medical school and from the graduate units help students set realistic long-term study plans that integrate the two curricula. Students enrolled in the Ph.D.-M.D. program take an average of eight years, including summers, to complete both degrees. The first year of the program is typically spent meeting requirements of the Philosophy degree.

Graduate Teaching Experience

Although teaching is not a general Graduate College requirement, experience in teaching is considered an important part of the graduate experience in this program.

Financial Aid

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program are offered financial aid, in the form of fellowships or assistantships, which cover living expenses and include a waiver of tuition and service fees. This aid will usually be continued for up to five years provided the student is making normal progress. Further details are qualifications are given in the department’s graduate regulations.

Master of Arts in Philosophy

The M.A. degree is awarded after completing Stage I. Students may not apply to the M.A. degree program. Students qualify for the M.A. degree
The Ph.D. program has three stages. The first stage is completed when a student has earned 32 hours of graduate credit. The second stage is completed when the student has earned 32 additional hours (or, having received a master’s degree previously, has earned and has been allowed transfer credit for a total of 64 hours) and has satisfied the preliminary examination requirement, a course distribution requirement, a foreign language requirement, and a logic requirement (see department website for details). Of the 64 hours required for the Ph.D. (beyond the MA level requirements), only 12 can be in Independent Study courses (PHIL 583), and at least 20 must be earned in regular seminars. The third stage is completed when the student has earned another 32 hours of graduate credit (usually in seminars and thesis research) and has satisfied the thesis and doctoral oral examination requirements (see below). Also required in the Third Stage is participation in a dissertation-writing seminar each term and participation in one regular seminar per year. Third-stage regular seminar participation is typically for 2 hours credit, thus totaling 4 hours beyond the 20 hours (min) of seminars required for Stage 2. A minimum grade point average of 3.33 (A = 4.0) is required for the Ph.D. degree. Candidates must also satisfy the Graduate College residence requirement.

Candidates need not take work in a minor field outside the department. In cases in which advanced study in philosophy would be enhanced by study in a related discipline, students may use such related coursework to satisfy the credit requirements for the degree, limited to 8 hours. If a student wishes the work to count as an extra-departmental minor, the minimum number of hours accepted is 8 and the maximum is 16. Courses applied toward the completion of a minor may not be applied toward the completion of the Course Distributions Requirement for the Philosophy Ph.D.

After satisfying these requirements, a candidate for the Ph.D. must submit an acceptable dissertation and pass a final, oral examination on the thesis. The acceptability of the thesis is judged and the final examination administered by the candidate’s doctoral committee.

Ph.D. candidates who wish simultaneously to pursue advanced degrees in other disciplines (e.g., medicine or law) are permitted to do so.

Information listed in this catalog is current as of 04/2019