

Living in Boulder as a Philosophy Grad Student

(This document was lovingly prepared by the 2009/2010 Graduate Student Recruitment Committee.)

The purpose of this document is to give new and prospective students a sense of what life is like as a graduate student in philosophy at the University of Colorado at Boulder. If you have any questions, please feel free to email one of our graduate student presidents, Tyler and Cory (tyler dot hildebrand at colorado dot edu, corwin dot aragon at colorado dot edu).

How to be a Philosophy Graduate Student

Departmental Activities and Service

Meeting faculty expectations. In addition to having good academic performance, the professors expect you to be an active member of the community. There are lots of different events and talks on CU's campus that are sponsored by the philosophy department, and you should plan to attend quite a few of them. On average, there are about 2 or 3 talks each week. Here is a list of events and the regularity with which they occur:

- **Colloquia** : Roughly 3 per semester. These are given by philosophers outside of the CU department in all areas of philosophy. Once a year, the department invites an alumnus/a to give one of the colloquium talks. This is encouraging, because you get to see former CU students who are succeeding in the field!
- **CHiPS** (Committee on the History and Philosophy of Science): Monthly. These talks are sponsored by a wide range of contributing departments. There are a wide variety of topics of interest to philosophers, especially in the area of philosophy of science.
- **Morris Colloquium**: This is an annual conference, usually focused on a topic in values, held in memory of a former CU Philosopher, Bertram Morris. The topics vary from issues in environmental ethics to cloning to human rights in a globalizing world. It is typically held in the spring semester.
- **RoME** (Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress): This is our very successful, annual, 4-day long ethics congress. It is the baby of Prof. Alastair Norcross and Prof. Ben Hale, and that is at least part of the reason it is called a "Congress" rather than a "Conference." "Congress" sounds more important. This takes place every August, and attracts lots of big name philosophers. The keynote speakers for the 2009 RoME Congress were Judith Jarvis Thomson, Shelly Kagan, and Don Marquis. Every year, the number of papers submitted grows substantially. We expect it to continue to thrive. Don't miss this event!
- **WiPs** (Work In Progress talks): Varying frequency. The papers presented at these talks are emailed out to the graduate student email list at least one week prior to the talk, so that you can read the paper before you hear the presentation. This maximizes the amount of time available to discuss the work. These are always interesting and, like Center Talks, are a great way to find out what other people in

the department are working on and to make yourself visible to others in the department.

- **Center Talks** (sponsored by the Center for Values and Social Policy): Weekly. These are typically given by members of the department (faculty and graduate students) on some issue in values and they are a great way to get to know what people are working on. These are beneficial because the crowd is usually small enough for everyone to take part in the Q and A.
- **THINK! Lectures**: 3 per semester. These talks are designed to bring philosophy to the general public. The series is sponsored by the Collins Foundation, so one lecture each year is devoted to the philosophy of Ayn Rand (in some way or another). They are usually late in the evening - 7:30pm - and lots of people from CU and the Boulder community attend. They are a hoot!

Contributing as a Grad Student

Expected Participation: There are different things you are expected to participate in in order to be a good grad student. Here's a list:

- **Graduate student meetings**: These are few (one per semester, unless something comes up), but it's important that you go to them. At these meetings, grad students determine committee members, grad student president(s), UGGS representatives, and discuss issues pertaining to life as a grad student here. The chair typically pops in at some point during these meetings to find out what's going on and to see if there's anything that the faculty ought to know about. You will be lured to these meetings with pizza.
- **Committee service**: There are multiple graduate student committees. There's really something for everybody among the list of options. Here's a brief, incomplete list: party planning (usually called the "Party Czar"), party cleanup, undergrad curriculum committee, grad curriculum committee, undergrad mentor program, diversity committee, etc.
- **RMPC (Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference)**: This is our annual graduate student conference where students from other universities from around the world present their work. Past keynote speakers include: Stephen Yablo, David Chalmers, Mark Johnston, Jaegwon Kim, Peter van Inwagen, Nathan Salmon, and Penelope Maddy. Graduate students run this show, so expect to help read submitted papers, comment on papers presented, run to the airport to pick up our keynote speakers and graduate student presenters, or attend the conference parties.
- **Graduate WIPs**: These are just like the faculty WIPs described above, but attendance is restricted to graduate students. The idea is to allow graduate students to present their work in a relaxed, informal setting in preparation for conferences, qualifying papers, or publication. Email Tyler Hildebrand if you're interesting in giving a talk!

Recommended Participation:

- **Graduate Teaching Program**: many grad students are involved in this, and they meet a few times each semester to discuss teaching methods, plan courses, etc. This is really a great resource for students who will be teaching their own classes someday!

- **Reading groups:** There is never a shortage of reading groups. Sometimes they are run by faculty, but many graduate students start their own reading groups. This is a great way to get to know people who are interested in similar research topics, and it can help keep you accountable on your own research.

Departmental Social Activities

On Campus: You will frequently find members of the department in the following locations: HLMS 180 (the grad lounge), HLMS 15 (the grad student offices), Buchanan's (on the Hill), and Celestial Seasonings (UMC commons). The grad lounge is an excellent place to hang out and meet fellow grad students. When you have down time on campus, stop by! Depending on the day and time you go to the grad lounge, there may be a few students studying or several students hosting an impromptu dance party (the latter are especially popular on Fridays).

General Social Events: Our department plays sports (sometimes fantasy sports), and, surprisingly, many of our grad students enjoy physical activity in some form or other. Boulder is a great place for hiking, rock climbing, snowboarding and snow skiing, etc, and our students take advantage of these opportunities. There are also semi-regular women's nights, happy hours, gatherings at bars around campus, and parties hosted by grad students and/or faculty. The department also has a knitting group called the Knitted Brow, run by Claudia Mills. Whether you're interested in grabbing a drink at The Sink with some grad students and faculty, wanting to go on a rock climbing trip, or just feel like sitting down and knitting a scarf, there's something for you to do on most days of the week. This department is *very* social - so don't expect to be bored, unless that's what you want to be (and even then, it's hard to do).

Average Time Commitment

Course Work: Being a graduate student is at least a full time job for most people. Nine hours of courses per week is considered a full course load. The general advice is that a student should spend *at least* two hours outside of class for every one hour she spends in class on studying, reading, and writing papers. That brings the coursework-related demands up to *at least* 27 hours per week. The workload for classes varies: some classes require weekly response papers, some require only a final paper, and reading load can vary from course to course.

Teaching: In addition to coursework, PhD students in their first years are given a 50% (or "half-time") teaching appointment, which means they are required to lead two recitation sections for an introductory philosophy course (e.g., PHIL 1000 – Introduction to Philosophy). Normal courses include two lectures per week by the professor, plus recitation. TAs with a 50% appointment lead two recitation sections of around 25 students each once per week. TAs are required to hold one hour of office hours for each hour they teach per week, which adds an additional two hours to their weekly load. In all, TAs can expect to spend approximately six hours per week teaching, attending lectures, and holding office hours. This does *not* include grading papers and exams, preparing for recitation sections, and communicating with students outside of class.

Departmental Activities: CU Boulder provides numerous opportunities for graduate students to take part in department activities. (See the above section Department Social Activities for more information.) Though these events are not required, attendance by graduate students is recommended. Greater attendance by the philosophy graduate community adds to a close-knit social atmosphere, and participation encourages dialogue, discussion, and intellectual improvement. These opportunities might total another three hours per week, if attended regularly.

Life in Boulder

Where to Live

Some Preliminary Notes: The streets north of downtown that cross Broadway are alphabetically arranged from South to North. Boulder is on the expensive side, but there are deals to be had. Look around, and check (e.g.) Craigslist frequently; new rentals pop up a lot. **You should live in Boulder for your first year** at the very least because you need to be on campus quite often and will want to experience the vibrant grad school night life :). Be wary of the property management companies. Some can be fine, but be aware that there are some companies that put up a good front and are then slow to respond to maintenance issues or otherwise unwilling to help you out. Consider your commute when deciding where to rent. You can look at the RTD website or Google Maps to find out whether there are stops near the apartment and which lines service them. Click [here](#) for a helpful map. Of course, the best way to find out about possible living situations is to ask other graduate students.

Overview of the neighborhoods: North Boulder (NoBo) is probably anything Alpine and north. South of that is downtown, until Arapahoe. The area South of Arapahoe, West of Campus, and North of Baseline is referred to as 'The Hill' (or Chautauqua, further West). South Boulder (SoBo) is the area south of Baseline. East Boulder is usually referred to as the '30th Street area.'

Housing Prices in the Boulder Area: Boulder is a relatively expensive place to live, in large part because zoning restrictions have prevented sprawling suburban development. Based on a rough survey of current philosophy grad students, the average cost (in Boulder) of a decent one bedroom or studio apartment that meets grad student standards is somewhere between \$650 to \$850/month (including basic utilities), although there are a few students who have found cheaper places. For this reason, many grad students choose to live with roommates, either in multiple bedroom apartments or in rental houses. These students usually pay between \$450 and \$650/month (including basic utilities). Of course, prices can vary widely depending on the usual factors (location, size of unit, quality, etc.). If you have any questions, please ask! Our graduate students are the best resource for getting started on a housing search. Finally, it should be noted that most students are able to find housing that fits within their budget; it is possible to live in Boulder on the TA stipend without taking out loans.

The Major Areas:

Extreme north Boulder (North of Violet): Yuppie area, lots of new construction, not too difficult to get to downtown via the Skip. A small shopping area including a few restaurants and coffee shops.

NoBo: Alpine to Violet along Broadway: Very nice area, nicer houses with more character than in SoBo. Slightly more expensive than SoBo but an easy walk to downtown, which is a major plus. The area near the "Ideal Market" (Alpine and Broadway) is nice, as is the area surrounding 9th and Alpine, by the park.

Downtown, Alpine to Arapahoe: The affordable rentals are in the east Pearl area, along with Spruce and Walnut. Look for something around 20th or farther east, although sometimes you can get lucky on Pine or Mapleton closer to downtown. It's very nice to be able to walk downtown from here, and even to campus. And the Hop is quite convenient; it runs all through downtown. There are also some fairly nice but expensive places west of Broadway, up against the mountains, for example around 9th and Arapahoe. The Mapleton Hill area is a nice area to the West of downtown. This will get you really close to nightlife, restaurants, coffee shops, etc. while simultaneously being right next to hiking and biking. It can be a bit harder to find an affordable place here, because it has lots of older homes and many wealthy people, but if you keep an eye out you can find some great places.

The Hill, Arapahoe to Baseline or 27th: Try to get someplace at least as far west as 9th. Areas closer to campus can be loud and obnoxious and the rentals can be overpriced. Although it's convenient to walk to campus from this area, the excellent bus system makes it unnecessary.

30th Street area, Baseline to Valmont along 30th: There are some relatively inexpensive apartments and condos in this area. Not surprisingly, lots of students live here, but it's not as obnoxious as the Hill. It's a fairly convenient walk to campus, although it's somewhat more difficult to get to downtown unless you're close to Pearl St. This area is much closer to the east downtown shopping areas and grocery stores, such as Target and the 29th Street Mall. One thing to note is that many apartments in this area may legitimately be able to claim they are a few blocks from campus or even "right across the street," but they are not near the part of campus you need to be on most of the time (Hellems, which is near the Hill). There's a nice mix of apartment complexes (Gold Run, Wimbledon) and houses here. This is a common area for students in our department.

SoBo, south of 27th: These are generally the cheapest places to live, and there are some relatively nice houses, often with families renting out a room or two in the basement. The Skip runs up Broadway, which is very convenient, the Dash runs along Broadway from the Table Mesa Park'nRide to Boulder Station (downtown), and the 204 runs along the eastern side of SoBo. SoBo is a few miles from Hellems and downtown Boulder, but the bike and bus routes are great. This is definitely a more quiet part of town. The Martin Acres area is a particular part of SoBo that has a lot of apartments and houses. The area

near Broadway is a very short bus or bike ride to campus. This is a good place to find a house to rent with a group of other grad students.

Outside Boulder (e.g., Gunbarrel, Lafayette, Longmont, Louisville, Broomfield, Denver): Rent is generally much cheaper in these areas, but access to campus and downtown isn't quite as easy. Many of our grad students spend a fair amount of time enjoying the bars and restaurants in downtown Boulder. If you plan to do the same, it is probably best to live inside of Boulder, especially during your first year of graduate study. (Note: The regional bus routes are efficient and reliable; the Broomfield, Flatiron's crossing, and Louisville/Superior (McCaslin PnR) park-n-rides are less than 30 minutes from downtown, and services run past midnight).

CU Family Housing: Despite the name, this housing is not restricted to families. This can be a great option for grad students because all the housing is pretty close to campus. The best thing about these places is what you get for the price, which includes all utilities (including TV and Internet). Put in your application ASAP if you want to live here, because the waitlists are very long. If you put your move-in date as June or July, you might be more likely to get a place than if you go with August, which is the peak move-in time for these apartments.

Nederland/the Mountains: You can find some great places up in the mountains as far as price, views, and outdoor opportunities go, but you will be a 25 minute bus ride from town. The winter is longer up in the mountains and you may find the roads to be impassable at times. If you are a big skier, living in Nederland will get you within 10 minutes of Eldora (the local ski spot).

Resources:

CU Family Housing - <http://housing.colorado.edu/fh/>

A Google Map that will give some context to the above - Boulder for Philosophy Grad Students:

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF&mmsa=0&msid=100998133419139014541.000477a551c6f377408c0>

Craigslist - <http://boulder.craigslist.org/apa/>

Ralphie's List - a rental search service available to students after you get your IdentiKey and password - <http://www.colorado.edu/OCSS/ralphieslist.html>

Housing Helpers - this site mostly has rentals from management companies, but they do a lot of fall pre-leasing, which can be nice if you need to pick a place before moving - <http://www.housinghelpers.com/>

Transportation

Car - You don't need a car if you live in Boulder. Really. Boulder is a relatively small community with lots of bike paths, great public transportation, and (usually!) nice weather. You might want a car if you plan to live outside of Boulder, have kids, or just feel attached to extreme mobility. If you do bring a car, the website for the DMV is (<http://www.colorado.gov/revenue/dmv>) and you will want to get a driver's license or ID card anyway so that you can establish residency. Pro Tip: the line at the DMV is almost

indescribably long at times. Go early and bring music, books, board games, etc. Another option for cars is something called Car Share (<http://carshare.org/>), where you can use cars at hourly or daily rates.

Bike - If you don't have one, get one. This is the best way to get around our fair city during most of the year. The city is full of bike paths and lanes that make biking safe and easy. Craigslist always has bikes in the area, there many good bike shops (Full Cycle, University Cycles, Bicycle Village, Performance Bikes, a Trek store, etc.), and there is also a Bicycle cooperative called Community Cycles. Boulder itself is flat enough to make bike rides doable. As you may have gleaned from the name of the area west of campus (the "Hill"), there is a tendency for things to be uphill the further west they are (but the tradeoff for this inconvenience is the beautiful Flatirons, which are visible from pretty much everywhere in Boulder. For the most part though, you will be able to tackle the hills in Boulder after a bit of practice if you're new to biking. The buses in town also have convenient bike racks on the front of buses. Here is a blog that links to a helpful map of bike paths in Boulder (<http://cyclinginboulder.blogspot.com/2007/05/boulder-bike-path-composite-map.html>). Boulder is beautiful, especially along the Boulder Creek path, why waste your time in a car or bus, emitting pollutants and not getting exercise?

Bus – The bus system in Boulder is excellent. As a student you get a bus pass, which entitles you to ride all of the buses for **FREE** (during the school year)! Boulder is served by RTD bus lines (<http://www.rtd-denver.com/>) and Community Transit Network bus lines (http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8823&Itemid=2989). Basically this means you can get anywhere in Boulder, Longmont, Louisville, and Denver for FREE! Here are some of the bus lines you may need to know about:

Stampede - services Colorado Ave.

Jump – services along Arapahoe Ave.

Hop - makes a loop that goes to Pearl Street, 29th Street Mall, and campus. Note: Hop buses do not have bike racks.

Skip – services along Broadway (from NoBo to SoBo)

Dash – services Table Mesa and Broadway (with special routes extending to Lafayette)

Bound - services 30th

203/225 - services Baseline/Broadway

AB – service to and from the airport (yes, the airport!)

B/BX - services Denver/Boulder along Highway 36

Late night buses - on Fri/Sat/Sun buses run from downtown to campus, Table Mesa, 29th Street Mall, and some other places.

There are many more bus routes than those listed above. If you need to use the bus system but don't know which route to take, consult Google maps! Just get directions from point A to point B and click the "public transit" option.

Walk - Walking is nice, too. Pedestrians own the roads in Boulder and there are plenty of safe and easy paths to walk on. Boulder feels like a pretty safe city, even late at night. But, keep your wits about you, of course.

Outdoor Activities

Hiking in the Flatirons

Rockclimbing:

Around Boulder: Check out Boulder Canyon (Sport and Trad Climbing) (http://www.neptunemountaineering.com/neptune/product.asp?s_id=0&prod_name=Boulder+Canyon+Rock+Climbs+by+Bob+D%27Antonio&pf_id=PAAAI AOPPKBMANHJ&dept_id=3031), The Flatirons (Bouldering, Sport, and Trad) (http://www.neptunemountaineering.com/neptune/product.asp?s_id=0&prod_name=Rock+Climbing+the+Flatirons+by+Richard+Rossiter&pf_id=PAAAAAEKLLDKFMAB&dept_id=3031), and Flagstaff Mountain (Bouldering) (<http://flagstaffmountainbouldering.blogspot.com/>) some fun climbing spots just outside your door.

1-2 hours away: Carter Lake (<http://drtopo.com/guidebooks/usa/Colorado/115>) and Horsetooth Reservoir (<http://drtopo.com/guidebooks/usa/Colorado/10>) are very good bouldering areas that are perfect for the cooler winter days. Check out The Palace for some good moderate sport climbing (<http://drtopo.com/guidebooks/usa/Colorado/114>).

Cycling:

There are many opportunities for mountain biking and casual riding in and around Boulder. Trail details and trail maps can be found for free at http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3046&Itemid=1038

Boulder is an exceptionally cyclist-friendly town. Getting around on one's bike is often faster than driving. Here is the link for cycling paths in the city of Boulder.

Skiing and Snowboarding

There are so many great opportunities to ski and snowboard near Boulder (within an hour and a half's drive) that it is difficult to know where to begin! There are three deals that may be of interest to prospective students. First, Eldora, a small resort 35 minutes from Boulder, offers season passes to CU students for approximately \$129. Second, there is a pass available to all Colorado residents for Breckenridge, Keystone, and Arapahoe Basin (with 10 days at Vail or Beaver Creek) for \$400 to \$450. Third, there is a pass available to all Colorado residents for Copper Mountain and Winter Park (with 6 days at Steamboat Springs) for \$399; Wells Fargo has a deal that enables CU students to get this pass for half price! In short, this is a fantastic place to study if you like to ski and/or snowboard.

Other Great Activities Close to Boulder

Cross Country Skiing

The Rocky Mountain National Park

Boulder Creek

Fly Fishing

Where to Eat and Drink:

Boulder has an impressive selection of great restaurants and bars, and many great happy hours! Ask your fellow graduate students for recommendations!