**Non-Regular Courses:  
Policies and Applications**

***last revised January 2024***

Ph.D. and M.A. students have the opportunity to count “Non-Regular Courses” towards their degree. Non-Regular Courses are courses that aren’t on the regular slate of six to eight graduate philosophy courses offered by the Department in a given semester. There are four kinds of Non-Regular Course:

* Independent Studies (using PHIL 5840 – Graduate Independent Study)
* Special Graduate Sections (i.e., creating and attaching a special graduate section onto a 4000-level PHIL course, using PHIL 5810 – Special Topics in Philosophy)
* Graduate courses in other departments that are relevant to the student’s research or teaching and that the student will use to count towards their philosophy degree
* WRTG 5050 (Graduate Studies in Writing and Rhetoric: College Writing Instruction), the course offered (usually only in the Fall) by the Program for Writing and Rhetoric that our students must take if they wish to be able to teach PHIL 1500 (Reading, Writing, and Reasoning), an undergraduate course that we offer every semester and that fulfills the College’s Written Communication Requirement.

Non-Regular Courses enable graduate students to tailor their coursework to their specific interests. In order to maintain healthy enrollments in our regular course offerings, however, the Department needs to manage and sometimes limit participation in these courses. Students wishing to do an Independent Study, create a Special Graduate Section, or count a non-philosophy course towards their philosophy degree thus need to apply to do so, using one of the application forms below. The Department can approve only a small number of Non-Regular Courses per semester.

Further information about and applications for each of the first three categories above of Non-Regular Courses can be found in the pages below. If you are using this document to submit an application to take one or more Non-Regular Courses in the coming semester, first use “Save As” to save a version of this document with your name at the start of the filename. Then select immediately below which category or categories of Non-Regular Course you are applying to take. To apply to take WRTG 5050, simply select the ‘WRTG 5050’ box below, fill in your name, and submit the document; there is no additional application for it.

Independent Study

Special Graduate Section

Graduate course in another department to count towards PHIL graduate degree

WRTG 5050 (Student’s Name: )

**Independent Study**

Independent Study is an opportunity to earn academic credit for learning outside the formal class structure. A graduate student who is interested in studying a topic that has not been and will not be covered in sufficient depth by courses offered during the period in which the student is taking courses may propose a research project to a tenure-track faculty member. If the faculty member (a) agrees that the topic is worth investigating and is not sufficiently covered by the regular course offerings and (b) shares sufficient interest in the topic to supervise an independent study project, then he or she may agree to an independent study arrangement. Faculty members are under no obligation to accept Independent Study students and do so only as their other commitments allow.

Independent Studies can be taken for one, two, or three credits. A three-credit Independent Study must have a comparable workload (e.g., with respect to readings and papers required) to a regular three-credit graduate-level course; and students taking them must meet with the supervising faculty member at least once a week. The workload of one- and two-credit Independent Studies can be reduced accordingly. PHIL 5840 (Graduate Independent Study) may not count towards distribution requirements for either the M.A. or the Ph.D. Students may not do more than one independent study in the same semester with the same professor.

*Eligibility*

To be eligible to apply for an Independent Study, students must

* have completed their first year in their program
* have no grades of Incomplete at the time of application
* be making satisfactory academic progress
* in the case of Ph.D. students, have completed their Diagnostic Paper, or else be scheduled to submit their Diagnostic Paper in the semester for which the Independent Study is requested.[[1]](#footnote-1)

*Application*

To apply to do an Independent Study in the coming semester, first use “Save As” to save a version of this document with your name at the start of the filename. Then fill out the form below and email it to the Director of Graduate Studies by the announced deadline. Cc the faculty member who would be supervising the Independent Study. Applications will be reviewed at least by the Department Chair and the DGS and possibly also by the rest of the Graduate Curriculum Committee. What you fill out below will, if the Independent Study is approved, act as the official Independent Study contract between the student, the supervising faculty member, and the Department. It is thus important that it be filled out fully and completely. Independent Studies can’t be approved on an incomplete form.

Applicants for Independent Studies must be enrolled in a backup class from the regular philosophy graduate course offerings in case their Independent Study is not approved.

Student’s Name:

Program:

The number and kind of Non-Regular Courses that you have already taken or are currently taking, other than WRTG 5050; (the options are: Independent Study, Special Graduate Section, and non-PHIL course for PHIL degree credit):

Brief description of proposed topic (this should be crafted in consultation with the supervising faculty member):

Name of faculty member who would supervise the Independent Study:

Year in the program (relative to the upcoming semester, excluding semesters not enrolled):

Number of credit hours so far completed towards PHIL graduate degree (including transfer credits):

Number of credit hours requested for the Independent Study:

(Three-credit Independent Studies must be comparable in workload [reading, writing, problem sets, discussion, etc.] to a regular three-credit graduate course. Independent Studies must be completed no later than the end of the semester in which they are taking place. One- or two-credit Independent Studies might be completed earlier than the end of the semester.)

For Ph.D. students, semester in which the student’s Diagnostic Paper was (or will be) submitted (e.g., Fall 2022):

Explanation of reading, writing, and any other requirements for the Independent Study (this should be crafted in close consultation with the supervising faculty member):

Frequency and duration of meetings for the Independent Study (this should be settled in consultation with the supervising faculty member):

Explain the extent (if any) to which the Independent Study matches the topic of the student’s thesis/dissertation (or likely thesis/dissertation topic):

The backup PHIL course from the coming semester that you are currently enrolled in and that you will take if this application is not approved (include course number, name, and instructor):

*The Committee’s Criteria*

* The extent to which the Independent Study involves an area of study that is not covered by the regular curriculum during the time that the student is doing coursework
* The seniority of the applicant
* The extent to which the Independent Study matches the topic of the applicant’s thesis/dissertation (or likely thesis/dissertation topic)
* The number of Non-Regular Courses the applicant has already taken, other than WRTG 5050 (the smaller this number, the more likely it is that the application will be approved)
* The number of applications for Non-Regular Courses that the Committee receives from other students
* How robust the enrollments are in the coming semester’s regular philosophy graduate courses.

*Final Approval*

If the Independent Study is approved, the application for it will act as the Independent Study contract between the student, the supervising faculty member, and the Department. For the purposes of Departmental recordkeeping, it should be attached to a group email among the student, the supervising faculty member, the DGS, and the Graduate Program Assistant so that the supervising faculty member and the DGS can certify on record their approval of the Independent Study.

**Special Graduate Section (using PHIL 5810 – Special Topics in Philosophy)**

Some but not all 4000-level courses offered by the Department are “slash” courses: they have a 5000-level graduate section attached. In cases in which no graduate section is attached to a 4000-level course, graduate students may request to have one attached specially for them. Logistically, this involves the Graduate Program Assistant enrolling the student in PHIL 5810 (Special Topics in Philosophy) and noting in the student’s record that this course is a Special Graduate Section attached to the 4000-level course in question. Students enrolled in such sections must have course requirements for that section that go beyond what is required of the undergraduates enrolled in the associated 4000-level course. The graduate section needs to involve work comparable to that of a regular graduate course.

Interested graduate students should first approach the faculty member teaching the 4000-level course in question. If the faculty member agrees that the topic of the course is not covered often enough in the Department’s regular graduate course offerings during the time that the student is doing coursework, he or she may agree to supervise the arrangement. PHIL 5810 (Special Topics in Philosophy) *can* count towards the distribution requirements for the M.A. and Ph.D. programs.

*Application*

To apply to attach a Special Graduate Section to a 4000-level course for the coming semester, first use “Save As” to save a version of this document with your name at the start of the filename. Then fill out the form below and email it to the Director of Graduate Studies by the announced deadline. Cc the faculty member who would be teaching the relevant 4000-level course and thus supervising the arrangement. Applications will be reviewed at least by the Chair and the DGS and possibly by the rest of the Graduate Curriculum Committee as well.

Applicants for Special Graduate Sections should be enrolled in a backup class from the regular graduate course offerings in case their application is not approved.

Student’s Name:

Program:

The number and kind of Non-Regular Courses that you have already taken or are currently taking, other than WRTG 5050; (the options are: Independent Study, Special Graduate Section, and non-PHIL course for PHIL graduate degree credit):

Name of the relevant 4000-level course and of the faculty member teaching it:

Reasons for wanting to enroll in a Special Graduate Section for this course:

Explanation of how the requirements of the Special Graduate Section would go beyond what is required of the undergraduates enrolled in the associated 4000-level course (this should be crafted in close consultation with the faculty member teaching the course):

The backup PHIL course from the coming semester that you are currently enrolled in and that you will take if this application is not approved (include course number, name, and instructor):

*The Committee’s Criteria*

* The extent to which the course involves an area of study that is not covered by the regular curriculum during the time that the student is doing coursework
* The number of Non-Regular Courses the applicant has already taken, other than WRTG 5050 (the smaller this number, the more likely it is that the application will be approved)
* The number of applications for Non-Regular Courses that the Committee receives from other students
* How robust the enrollments are in the coming semester’s regular philosophy graduate courses.

**Graduate Course in Another Department**

Ph.D. students and M.A. students doing the Non-Thesis Option may count towards their degree requirements up to 9 credit hours (typically three courses) of CU Boulder graduate courses outside of philosophy. M.A. students doing the Thesis Option may count up to 6 (typically two courses). These courses should be relevant to the student’s research or teaching and be approved by the student’s advisor, mentor, or likely advisor (the DGS can serve this role if need be).

If a non-philosophy graduate course is being offered in the coming semester, it is relevant to your research or teaching, you would like to take it as one of your allowed non-philosophy courses, and your advisor, mentor, or likely advisor approves of your taking it, then you should apply to do so using this form.

Applicants for non-philosophy graduate courses must be enrolled in a backup class from the regular philosophy graduate course offerings in case their application is not approved.

*Application*

To apply to take a non-philosophy course in the coming semester that will count towards your philosophy degree, first use “Save As” to save a version of this document with your name at the start of the filename. Then fill out the form below and email it to the Director of Graduate Studies by the announced deadline. Cc the faculty advisor/mentor who approved your taking the course. Applications will be reviewed at least by the Chair and the DGS and possibly by the rest of the Graduate Curriculum Committee as well.

Student’s Name:

Program:

Name of philosophy faculty member who approved your taking this course:

The number and kind of Non-Regular Courses that you have already taken or are currently taking, other than WRTG 5050 (the options are: Independent Study, Special Graduate Section, and non-PHIL course for PHIL graduate degree credit):

Department, course name, and course number of the non-philosophy graduate course you would like to take and name of the non-philosophy faculty member teaching it:

Relevance of the course to your research or teaching interests:

The backup PHIL class from the coming semester that you are currently enrolled in and that you will take if this application is not approved (include course number, name, and instructor):

*The Committee’s Criteria*

* The number of Non-Regular Courses the applicant has already taken, other than WRTG 5050 (the smaller this number, the more likely it is that the application will be approved)
* The number of applications for Non-Regular Courses that the Committee receives from other students
* How robust the enrollments are in the coming semester’s regular philosophy graduate courses.

1. If the student fails to submit their Diagnostic Paper by the deadline, the student would have to drop the Independent Study, if one had been approved. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)