



Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

**Graduate Student Handbook  
Philosophy Department  
University of Colorado Boulder**

*updated **Summer 2025***

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## 1. ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

This Graduate Student Handbook is produced jointly by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and the Philosophy Graduate Student Presidents, with input from the wider Philosophy graduate student body. Its purpose is to inform incoming graduate students of the nuances of the Graduate Program as well as of life in the Department, the University, and Boulder more generally. It also serves as a reference for continuing students. The content is collected from general information from the Department and the experiences of previous graduate students.

Quite a lot of important information about the Graduate Programs and the Department can be found on the [Graduate portion](#) of the [Department Website](#). Perhaps most crucial are the [Official Ph.D. Program Requirements \(pdf\)](#) and [Official M.A. Program Requirements \(pdf\)](#). It is imperative that students be familiar with these official requirements. On the website you can also find:

- a general graduate program [Overview](#)
- a general [Ph.D. Program Description](#)
- a general [M.A. Program Description](#)
- information about the [Bachelor's–Accelerated Master's \(BAM\) Program](#)
- descriptions of our [Graduate Courses](#) for the coming semester (as well as past semesters)
- photos and webpages for our [Graduate Students](#)
- [faculty webpages](#)
- information about [Funding](#)
- the important and often overlooked [Grad Resources](#) page
- a well-maintained [Google events calendar](#)
- pages on Departmental [Climate](#) and related [Best Practices](#)
- and much more.

This Handbook will try to avoid repeating information that can be found on these pages.

In addition to the website and this Handbook, three other important resources are the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), the Graduate Program Assistant, and your Graduate Student Presidents.

Should you find anything inaccurate or incomplete in this Handbook or on the website, please let your Graduate Student Presidents and/or the DGS know.

## 2. WHO'S WHO (2023-24)

**Philosophy Graduate Student Presidents for 2024-25:** [Tyler Porter](#) and [Kyle York](#). They set the agenda for graduate student meetings and coordinate the selection of volunteers for service positions for the year. They are also the graduate student representatives at faculty meetings and so can ask questions and draw faculty attention to graduate student concerns.

**Department Chair:** [Rob Rupert](#).

**Director of Graduate Studies (DGS):** [Julia Staffel](#). You can ask the DGS questions about requirements and policies and consult the DGS for general advice.

**M.A. Advisor:** [Mitzi Lee](#). A dedicated advisor for M.A. students. M.A. students are encouraged to go to the M.A. Advisor with questions about M.A. requirements and policies and for general advice about the M.A. program.

**Course Scheduler and Director of Undergraduate Studies:** [Garrett Bredeson](#). You will work with the Course Scheduler in connection with your teaching appointments, whether as a Teaching Assistant (TA) or Graduate Part-Time Instructor (GPTI).

All students are assigned a **Faculty Mentor** (see “Mentoring Program” below).

**Graduate Program Assistant:** [Karen Sites](#). The Graduate Program Assistant is here to help you understand Departmental and [Graduate School](#) policies as they pertain to our Graduate Programs. You will inevitably need Karen’s help, so do introduce yourself to her sooner rather than later. Karen’s office is in the Muenzinger building, 1st floor, room D120.

**Program Assistant:** [Terri Baldridge](#). The Program Assistant runs the Department Office (Muenzinger D110) and all things financial for the Department. You would see Terri about, for example, getting into the payroll system, problems with your paycheck, and for reimbursements for department-related expenses.

**Undergraduate Program Coordinator:** [Alex Beard](#). As well as being the Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Alex publishes “News and Notes,” which comes out every Monday and announces talks and events of interest to philosophers as well as news about faculty and graduate students. *If you have an academic achievement to share (e.g., you presented a paper at a conference, you had a paper accepted for publication, you won a fellowship), send this to Alex so he can include it in the next News and Notes.* Alex is also the person to see if you want to book a classroom for something, to book the Reading Room or check its schedule, to add something to the Department’s Google calendar, or to add a student to your course.

The Department’s phone number is (303) 492-6132.

### 3. ORIENTATION MEETING AND RECEPTION

At the beginning of the Fall semester, there is an orientation meeting for incoming graduate students, run by the DGS. This meeting is an opportunity for you to meet some or all of the people above, other incoming students in your program, and possibly some other philosophy faculty and graduate students. The meeting includes a general introduction to the Department and Program, an overview of the degree requirements, and a good bit of other useful information. This meeting is mandatory.

There is also usually a beginning-of-the-year party. The central purpose is for Department members to socialize, and it is a chance to meet faculty in a casual setting and learn who works in your fields of interest. It is also an opportunity to meet fellow graduate students. This event is family friendly, and your partners and children are invited.

### 4. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The official degree requirements are online ([Ph.D.](#), [M.A.](#)), but a few words can be offered from experience.

#### **Distribution Requirements**

M.A. students must take at least one course in each of the three core areas (History, Metaphysics/Epistemology, and Values), but the latter two are covered by the first-year proseminars anyway. Ph.D. students are required to take at least three courses in each area (nine courses total). Among the three History courses required for Ph.D. students, one must be in Ancient and another in Early Modern. Though the History distribution requirement is in this way more complicated to fulfill than the M&E or Values requirements, the Department offers fewer courses in History than in either M&E or Values, which makes satisfying the History requirement more challenging than the others. Ph.D. students should make it a priority to fulfill the History requirements sooner rather than later.

Whenever you are registering for courses to satisfy these requirements, consult the [Graduate Courses](#) page. It contains descriptions of the courses for the coming semester as well as which distribution requirement (if any) each course satisfies. You can also always get clarification from the DGS.

#### **Proseminars**

Two first-year proseminars – a Values Proseminar in the fall and a Metaphysics/Epistemology Proseminar in the spring – are required of all first-year graduate students and are open only to first-

year graduate students in Philosophy. The Graduate Program Assistant will automatically enroll you in these. They do count towards the Values and M&E distribution requirements, respectively.

## Logic

Both the M.A. and the Ph.D. program have a logic requirement. It is not demanding: it requires having taken logic only through the predicate calculus and gotten a B-. There's a chance that you have already met it by taking an undergraduate course in symbolic logic. But if you haven't met it, you should, in your first semester, sit in on a section of our undergraduate Symbolic Logic course, PHIL 2440, and take the exams. See the [M.A. requirements](#) and [Ph.D. requirements](#) for more information on this. You don't need to officially enroll in 2440; you can just sit in. But do let the professor know if you plan to do that. You can find out when PHIL 2440 (or any classes) meet on this very useful page: <https://classes.colorado.edu>. If you are going to sit in on 2440, it is recommended that you treat it as one of your three classes for the term (three is the typical load), though it will not count towards the classes required for your program (15 for the Ph.D., 8 for the Thesis M.A., and 11 for the Non-Thesis M.A.). Only graduate-level classes count.

If you think you have already met the logic requirement, *email the syllabus from the relevant course and the grade you earned to Prof. Raul Saucedo* ([raul.saucedo@colorado.edu](mailto:raul.saucedo@colorado.edu)) and cc the DGS. Raul will review the syllabus to determine whether the course in question fulfills our logic requirement.

It is recommended that new students complete the logic requirement in the fall semester of their first year.

## Transfer Credit

Ph.D. students can transfer up to 21 credits (usually seven courses) of the 45 total required. M.A. students can transfer up to 9 (usually three courses) of the 30 (Thesis) or 33 (Non-Thesis) required, provided that these courses did not count toward a previous graduate degree. Talk to the DGS during your first year in the program to discuss the process. The Graduate Program Assistant (Karen Sites) can't actually submit the paperwork until you have established a GPA at CU, which will be after your first semester. You *can* use transfer courses to fulfill distribution requirements.

There may be value in not transferring too many credits. If you transfer lots of credits, you will proceed more quickly through the program but will miss out on taking more classes with professors here. That said, there is no maximum number of credits that you are allowed to take.

## Diagnostic Paper (Ph.D. only)

This paper is due at the start of the third semester in the Ph.D. program, or your first semester in the Ph.D. program if you are coming in with an M.A. in Philosophy. Students with an M.A. degree in philosophy from CU Boulder are exempt from this requirement.

The Diagnostic Paper is not graded; just submitting it is enough to fulfill the requirement. It is a chance to get detailed feedback from several faculty members on a substantial paper of yours. This paper is not anonymous. Your name will be on it, and the faculty who evaluate it will usually have their names on their evaluations.

### **Qualifying Paper (Ph.D. only)**

The Qualifying Paper actually consists of two papers: an argumentative paper on some topic and a literature review in that same area. The argumentative paper is by far the more important one.

You will write your Qualifying Paper under the guidance of a Qualifying Paper Advisor. It's a good idea to start thinking about your Qualifying Paper about a year in advance of when it is due, since it can be a more developed version of a seminar paper that you might write during that year. Once you have an idea of what you will write on, you should approach a faculty member who has expertise in the area and with whom you would like to work. This person often becomes your Dissertation Advisor as well (though this is not required), so take the decision of who will be your Qualifying Paper Advisor seriously.

Be sure to produce several drafts for your QP Advisor and get as much feedback from them as you can. It is also a great idea to do a Graduate-Work-In-Progress (GWIP) Talk based on a draft of your Qualifying Paper. It is a good idea to have it as a goal to have a first draft of the argumentative paper completed during the Spring semester before the Fall term in which the paper is due.

Your Qualifying Paper will be submitted anonymously and evaluated by a committee of three faculty members, one of whom is the Qualifying Paper Advisor. The other two members are not supposed to know your identity, nor you theirs. There are four possible verdicts from the committee:

- *Pass with Distinction* (this is rarely given out and would mean that the paper is close to publishable as is)
- *Pass* (only some papers pass the first time around)
- *Revise & Resubmit* (this is common)
- *Does Not Pass* (this also definitely happens but is less likely to happen if you make sure to get lots of feedback from your QP Advisor, give a GWIP talk on your paper, etc.).

If your paper Does Not Pass, you get a second chance, but it has to be a new paper; it cannot be a revision of the one that did not pass. If this second submission Does Not Pass, you can appeal, and a new committee will evaluate your paper. If the appeal fails, then the Department is very likely to vote not to advance you to the Prospectus stage, which means that you can no longer continue in the Ph.D. program. However, you are eligible for a (Non-Thesis) M.A. degree.

If you get a Revise & Resubmit, you will have until sometime in the next semester to submit a revised version of your paper (the DGS will work out a suitable due date with you and/or your QP Advisor). You also have the option of doing a new paper from scratch, but that is probably not a good idea. You will have gotten feedback from the committee explaining the revisions that they think need to be made. Take these very seriously and continue to work closely with your QP Advisor on the revisions. If your resubmission Does Not Pass, you can appeal, as above. As above, if the appeal fails, you likely cannot continue in the Ph.D. program, but you are eligible for a (non-thesis) M.A. degree.

If you Pass, then it's on to the Prospectus.

Incidentally, you cannot be promoted to Graduate Part-Time Instructor (GPTI) – i.e., teach your own classes – until you pass the Qualifying Paper.

Since you may find it useful to look at some sample literature reviews before you work on yours, some recent ones have been collected here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yevc8s5ni9jlsey/AADSxPX1bKOecWVJQyXCbcIa?dl=0>.

### **Prospectus (Ph.D. only)**

Ideally, you would start thinking about your Prospectus even before you find out about your Qualifying Paper, and then defend it in the Spring semester of your 3<sup>rd</sup> year (this is for students who did not come in with an M.A.). However, it's not uncommon for students to defend their Prospectus in the Fall semester of their 4<sup>th</sup> year. So long as you have defended your Prospectus before your 4<sup>th</sup> year is up, you will still be thought of as making "satisfactory progress." But the sooner you finish and defend the Prospectus, the better. Being late with your Prospectus may hurt you when it comes to being selected for a Departmental Dissertation Fellowship (these give you a semester off teaching to work on your Dissertation).

It is important to choose the right Advisor for your Prospectus and Dissertation. This is virtually always the same person. (In addition to 'Dissertation Advisor', you also hear the terms 'Dissertation Supervisor' and 'Dissertation Director'.) It is often the same person as your Qualifying Paper Advisor too, but it doesn't have to be. Ideally, you'll find a faculty member – it has to be a tenure-track faculty member – (i) who has sufficient expertise in the area you'll be working on, (ii) with whom you get along well, and (iii) whose feedback and philosophical conversations you profit from. Start thinking about who your Dissertation Advisor will be sooner rather than later.

It is up to you to approach possible Prospectus/Dissertation Advisors. It may be best to make the initial request by email, to give the faculty member time to think about it and avoid putting them on the spot. Include a reasonably detailed description of your project if you can. If you just want to talk about some possible projects with several faculty to help you decide what to narrow in on, that's also fine. Faculty

members aren't required to say Yes, but if you have a good rapport with them and have done well in their courses, they will probably say Yes.

It is also up to you to put together the rest of your Prospectus Committee. Your Advisor can give you guidance on this. The Prospectus Committee requires five members. Your Dissertation Committee will also require five members, one of whom must be from outside the Department – either from another department at CU Boulder or from another university entirely (whether in philosophy or not). Although for the Prospectus Committee, all five members *can* be from within the Philosophy Department, it makes sense to have whoever will be the outside member of your Dissertation Committee serve in this role on your Prospectus Committee as well. Then you won't need to reshuffle your committee after you defend your Prospectus.

An important thing to note about the Prospectus: you can't apply for University fellowships until you have defended your Prospectus, and having applied for such fellowships is an important factor in determining who will get a Departmental Dissertation Fellowship (which gives you a semester off of teaching to work on your Dissertation). So defending your Prospectus sooner rather than later is to your advantage.

As for how to do a Prospectus, your Advisor will be your best resource for this. But a good rule of thumb is to think of it as consisting of a long abstract (~1,000-2,000 words) for each chapter or paper within your dissertation. Chris Heathwood created a [Dropbox folder](#) with some sample prospectuses (including his own from way back when). The Zambrano, Boespflug, and Saenz prospectuses in that folder are longer and more developed than a prospectus needs to be. Heathwood's prospectus was 17 pages and less than 5,000 words, and that's a fine length. Zambrano's and Boespflug's are around 10,000 words, which is definitely longer than it needs to be, or, according to the official rules, should be. Those rules that say that "The Prospectus should be in the range of 4,500-7,500 words (excluding footnotes and bibliography)." Because it is useful to think of the prospectus as consisting of a long abstract for each of the papers/chapters in your dissertation, Heathwood also included in the folder above some sample long abstracts that he wrote for conferences. They may give you a sense of what level of detail and worked-out-ness is appropriate; each of them is around 1,000-1,200 words.

Of course, you should be working closely with your advisor on your prospectus and your advisor will be able to tell you if what you are showing them is over- or under-developed.

### **Satisfactory Progress**

Ph.D. students are supposed to be making "satisfactory progress" in the program, and this is evaluated annually. It is measured by consideration of your coursework (you should generally be taking three courses per semester); whether you are satisfying the Distribution Requirements; whether you are taking Incompletes (keep these to a minimum); whether you turn in your Diagnostic and Qualifying Papers on time; and whether you complete your Prospectus on time. (See the section on "Satisfactory



progress” on the [Official Ph.D. Program Requirements](#) document.) A meeting is held each April at which the faculty discuss the progress of each Ph.D. student. Shortly after this meeting, you will receive an email from the DGS on the state of your progress in the program. If you are behind, and the DGS notifies you that you have to meet specific deadlines in order not to lose your funding, act promptly.

There aren’t strict “satisfactory progress” requirements for M.A. students. For those M.A. students doing the *Thesis Option*, the program is designed so that you take three courses in each of your first two semesters; then you identify your Thesis Advisor and start working on your Thesis over the summer; then you take the last two courses during your second year (whether both in your third semester or one in your third and the other in your fourth) as you continue to work on your Thesis, which you finish and defend in your fourth semester. For the *Non-Thesis Option*, you would simply take three courses in each of your four semesters (11 courses total). In either case (Thesis or Non-Thesis), you would graduate in two years.

For Ph.D. students, it is good to get some idea about how you are doing within the program before progress reports come out after each Spring semester. One way to get a feel for how the Department perceives your progress is to check the written evaluations from the professors who have taught the graduate courses that you took. The Department recently started a new practice concerning these: rather than just store them for those who might ask to see them, Karen will collect them from faculty each semester and send them out to relevant students.

### **Doctoral Dissertation / Master’s Thesis**

The last and most significant requirement of the Ph.D. program is the Dissertation, including its public defense. The M.A. program on the Thesis Option culminates in a similar but smaller project, the Master’s Thesis.

As noted in the Prospectus section above, it is important to choose the right Advisor for your Dissertation; same for a Master’s Thesis. Ideally, you’ll find a faculty member – it has to be a tenure-track faculty member – (i) who has sufficient expertise in the area you’ll be working on, (ii) with whom you get along well, and (iii) whose feedback and philosophical conversations you profit from. Start thinking about who your Advisor will be sooner rather than later.

It is up to you to approach possible Dissertation/Thesis advisors. It may be best to make the initial request by email, to give the faculty member time to think about it and avoid putting them on the spot. Include a reasonably detailed description of your project if you can. If you just want to talk about some possible projects with several faculty to help you decide what to choose, that’s also fine. Faculty members aren’t required to say Yes, but if you have a good rapport with them and have done well in their courses, they will probably say Yes.

It is also up to you to put together the rest of your Thesis/Dissertation Committee. Your Advisor can give you guidance on this. Master's Thesis Committees have three members: the Advisor plus two others from the Philosophy Department. Dissertation Committees have five members, one of whom has to be from outside the Philosophy Department. See the advice on this in the Prospectus section above.

There are rules regarding the scheduling of your Dissertation Defense that have the effect of requiring a good bit of time to pass between when you submit your final "defense copy" of your Dissertation to your Advisor and when your defense can occur. So be wary of this. Though Ph.D. students often take six or more years to finish, there always seems to be a rush at the end to get the defense scheduled before some deadline.

The defense itself usually lasts about two hours, but there is no official time limit. It typically begins by having the candidate briefly explain what they take themselves to have accomplished in their dissertation. Then the committee members take turns asking the candidate questions. Once the committee is finished, the chair may invite audience members to ask questions if they wish. The committee then dismisses the candidate and anyone else in the room so that it can deliberate and decide whether the dissertation passes. At least four out of five members of the committee need to agree that the dissertation passes in order for it to pass.

You will need to have accumulated 30 dissertation hours to graduate from the Ph.D. program. You can take up to 10 per semester. Have Karen enroll you in 10 per semester (you can't sign up for them yourself) once you are done with your coursework. If you don't yet have a prospectus/dissertation advisor, you can just use the DGS as a temporary stand-in. There appears to be no maximum number of dissertation hours that is allowed for Ph.D. students (but, strangely, there is a maximum number of thesis hours allowed for M.A. students).

### **A Sample Timeline for the Ph.D. Program for Finishing in Five Years, Without Having Come in with an M.A. in Philosophy, and Coming In Having Already Fulfilled the Logic Requirements**

#### ----- 1<sup>st</sup> YEAR -----

- FALL:     *Courses:* Values Proseminar, Ancient History Course, M&E Course  
            *Appointment:* Teaching Assistant (TA)  
            (Domestic students: start working to establish residency right away! [see sec. 8 below])
- SPRING:   *Courses:* M&E Proseminar, Early Modern Course, Values Course  
            *Appointment:* TA

----- 2<sup>nd</sup> YEAR -----

- FALL:     *Courses:* Values Course, History Course, M&E Course  
            Turn in Diagnostic Paper at start of Fall semester  
            Decide on Qualifying Paper topic and find a Qualifying Paper Advisor  
            *Appointment:* TA
- SPRING:   *Courses:* three courses of your choice  
            Continue working on Qualifying Paper  
            *Appointment:* TA

----- 3<sup>rd</sup> YEAR -----

- FALL:     *Courses:* three courses of your choice (your last three courses)  
            Turn in Qualifying Paper at start of Fall semester  
            Find a Prospectus/Dissertation Advisor and start working on Prospectus  
            *Appointment:* TA
- SPRING:   Enroll in 10 dissertation hours  
            Continue working on Prospectus and Defend Prospectus by the end of the semester  
            Start working on Dissertation over the summer while trying to get a paper published  
            *Appointment:* TA

----- 4<sup>th</sup> YEAR -----

- FALL:     Enroll in 10 dissertation hours  
            Continue working on Dissertation while trying to get a paper published  
            *Appointment:* Promotion to Graduate Part-Time Instructor (GPTI)
- SPRING:   Enroll in 10 dissertation hours (you've now reached the required 30)  
            Continue working on Dissertation while trying to get a paper published  
            Work on job applications over the summer  
            *Appointment:* GPTI

----- 5<sup>th</sup> YEAR -----

- FALL:     Enroll in \*3\* dissertation hours (because that's all a DDF covers)  
            Continue working on Dissertation while trying to get a paper published  
            Go on Job Market  
            *Appointment:* Departmental Dissertation Fellowship (DDF)
- SPRING:   Enroll in at least 5 dissertation hours (the minimum needed to hold an appointment)  
            Campus interviews for jobs  
            Defend Dissertation  
            Accept job offer  
            Live happily ever after  
            *Appointment:* GPTI

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This would be a truly ideal timeline. Reality is often messier.

## A Sample Timeline for the M.A. Program, Non-Thesis Option

----- 1<sup>st</sup> YEAR -----

FALL:     *Courses:* Values Proseminar, History Course (Ancient or Modern), sit in on PHIL 2440  
(Logic)  
              (Domestic students: start working to establish residency right away! [see sec. 8 below])

SPRING:   *Courses:* M&E Proseminar, two more courses of your choice  
              *Appointment:* TA

----- 2<sup>nd</sup> YEAR -----

FALL:     *Courses:* three courses of your choice  
              Apply to Ph.D. programs (if interested)

SPRING:   *Courses:* three courses of your choice

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## A Sample Timeline for the M.A. Program, Thesis Option

----- 1<sup>st</sup> YEAR -----

FALL:     *Courses:* Values Proseminar, History Course (Ancient or Modern), sit in on PHIL 2440  
(Logic)  
              (Domestic students: start working to establish residency right away! [see sec. 8 below])

SPRING:   *Courses:* M&E Proseminar, two more courses of your choice  
              *Appointment:* TA  
              Find thesis advisor by this summer, start working on Master's Thesis

----- 2<sup>nd</sup> YEAR -----

FALL:     *Courses:* two courses of your choice, enroll in 3 thesis hours (PHIL 6950 – Master's Thesis)  
              Continue working on Master's Thesis  
              Apply to Ph.D. programs (if interested)

SPRING:   *Courses:* one course of your choice (your final course), enroll in 3 thesis hours  
              Finish and Defend Master's Thesis

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M.A. students doing the Thesis Option can, however, take all 6 of their required thesis hours in a single semester if they want or need to. M.A. students doing the Thesis Option must take a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6 total thesis hours, but 6 is the standard, since it pairs well with taking 24 credit hours of coursework; these numbers combine for the 30 credit hours required for the Thesis MA. If an M.A. student doing the thesis option reaches the maximum number of allowed thesis hours (6) without having defended, then, in subsequent semesters, they need to enroll in PHIL 6940 – Master's Candidate

for Degree. This is a single-hour course and you cannot take more than one hour of it in a given semester.

One hour of PHIL 6950 – Master’s Thesis or one hour of PHIL 6940 – Master’s Candidate for Degree is full-time by Graduate School standards to qualify to be eligible to defend the thesis. But even though one hour of Master’s Thesis is full-time, you still need to have a total of at least 3 other thesis hours from previous semesters to defend (because the minimum is 4 thesis hours).

### **Job Market Support (Ph.D. students)**

The Department has a dedicated Placement Officer and Placement Committee to assist Ph.D. students who are on the job market. They will look over your application materials; assist you in crafting the various statements that are required in your job applications; conduct mock interviews; and give you advice on navigating interactions with departments that have expressed interest in you, asked to interview you, or made you a job offer. Please do everything they ask you to do, which is all in the service of trying to get you a job.

In recent years the Department has sometimes been able to hire as Lecturers (a.k.a. adjuncts) recent Ph.D. graduates who did not get a job elsewhere. This is not a long-term career option but a means of support while graduates try to find employment elsewhere. The Department gives graduates *who are actively on the job market* priority for three years after graduation. But there are no guarantees of such employment. It depends on undergraduate demand for our courses, funding from the College, the areas of teaching needing coverage, and the graduate’s own teaching record.

### **Defending your thesis and the F-1 Visa (for International Students)**

Graduating students on an F-1 visa should be aware that, should you choose to graduate in the summer but defend your dissertation (or otherwise complete your degree requirements) before the end of May, your last date of enrollment for the purposes of the F-1 will be put in May of that year – not in August – even though the graduation date will be in August. That is, the last date of enrollment and the graduation date are NOT the same thing: you can fail to be enrolled for a period of time before you officially graduate. This will affect when you can apply for so-called [Optional Practical Training](#) (OPT), which in turn affects whether you receive your OPT in time to teach for the summer (or even fall) of the following academic year. Contact [International Students and Scholar Services](#) (ISSS) for more information. You can also contact two recent graduates of our program, Alex Lloyd ([alex.lloyd@colorado.edu](mailto:alex.lloyd@colorado.edu)) or Daniel Coren ([daniel.coren@colorado.edu](mailto:daniel.coren@colorado.edu)), who were international students; they’d be happy to share their experiences.

## 5. COURSE INFORMATION

### Grading Standards

As at any university, grading standards vary among professors, but there are some common patterns. The grades for graduate students tend to run from A to B+, although lower grades are occasionally given. Although professors naturally differ in their grading patterns, and in their understanding of those grades, there is some consensus among the faculty that “A” grades should be given for excellent work, “A–” – for satisfactory but not excellent work, and “B+” grades for work that is problematic and borderline satisfactory at best. Getting a lot of B+ grades is worrisome, especially for Ph.D. students.

Your grades do matter. For example, you need an A– average over any nine hours in each of the three areas for the Distribution Requirements. They also play a role in the awarding of Department Dissertation Fellowships. But they probably matter less than you think. For example, you don’t include a transcript when you apply for jobs in philosophy and so prospective employers (in philosophy, at least) will never know your grades. Nonetheless, grades are a good way of knowing how you are doing in the program.

### Types of Graduate Courses

There are five main types of courses you can take to count towards the required courses for the program:

- **“Slash Courses”:** These courses are listed as 4000/5000-level courses and are open to both graduate students and advanced undergraduates. Slash courses introduce graduate students and advanced undergraduates to fields of study at a level above the typical undergraduate level. For instance, if you are unfamiliar with philosophy of mind, the slash course will bring you in above an undergraduate level, but not at the highest graduate level where you need to know the history, literature, and jargon of philosophy of mind. As a result, slash courses can be useful for those who want a general survey of a particular topic or simply want to learn more before pursuing study at a higher level. Slash courses usually fulfill distribution requirements in one of the three core areas, and they always count as graduate-level credit. The downsides are that the class size is generally larger and sometimes things have to be pitched at a level lower than they would be pitched in a grad-only course.
- **5000-Level Grad-Only Courses:** 5000-level courses are pitched at a higher level that generally assumes some expertise, may be similar to seminars in style (see below), and are dedicated to graduate students. These do not necessarily satisfy the three core areas (but usually do), and they will always count for graduate credit.

- **6000-Level Graduate Seminars:** Courses taught at the 6000 level are usually seminars (i.e., these are generally smaller courses that encourage the most active student participation). 6000-level seminars are often taught from the research interests and perspectives of the professor.
- **“Non-Regular Courses”:** These are courses that aren’t on the regular slate of seven or so graduate courses offered by the Department each semester. They include
  - 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 interests 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.

You can use these to tailor your studies, but in order to manage enrollment in the regular courses offered by the Department, you need to apply for approval. See “Non-Regular Courses: Policies and Applications” on the [Grad Resources](#) for more details.

- **Greek and Latin Translation Courses:** These one-credit courses (PHIL 5030 and PHIL 5040) are offered most semesters. Mitzi Lee usually does the Greek and Bob Pasnau the Latin. They meet once a week, and you work on translating philosophical work from the original Greek or Latin into English. Meeting time, text, and level of difficulty are determined in consultation with the students involved. There may be a translation exam at the end of the semester. You need to come in with some competence in the language in order to take these courses. If you plan to specialize in history, there is a good chance that you should be taking one or both of these courses each semester. They do count towards the 45 credits of coursework needed for the Ph.D. Talk to Mitzi or Bob for more information on them.

## 6. GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

In addition to the Ph.D. degree, the graduate school offers a number of interdisciplinary certification programs. Graduate certificates offer students an opportunity for interdisciplinary study, and they may help students on the job market by increasing the number of positions for which they qualify. Some options: Cognitive Science; Women and Gender Studies; Environment, Policy, and Society. The [University Catalog](#) contains a [list of Graduate Certificates](#).

## **Certificate in College Teaching**

One certificate worth special mention is the [Certificate in College Teaching](#), which is offered through the [Center for Teaching & Learning](#). It is a nice addition to your Teaching Portfolio. Unlike most certificates, it requires no coursework. Watch for workshops and opportunities from our Lead GPTI (the lead instructor among the graduate students in the Department) as well as Teaching Workshops put on by the Philosophy Department. The Placement Committee may also offer a workshop on professional development for people who are not yet on the job market.

## **7. FUNDING**

### **Department Funding**

Perhaps the most important practical issue for a graduate student is how to fund their education and life in Boulder. The [Funding](#) page on the Department website has a wealth of information about funding, including information about TA-ships, GPTI-ships, Departmental Dissertation Fellowships (DDFs), Summer RA-ships, and funding for travel. Note that funding will be limited for PhD students who continue into their seventh year (the policy concerning 7<sup>th</sup>-year funding is available on the [Grad Resources](#) page).

We also plan to offer PhD students a semester of RA-ship later in their studies here, while they are GPTI-ing and doing dissertation work. Ideally, this would occur around the 5<sup>th</sup>-year, although our offers will be constrained by teaching needs.

There are two main ways to get funding from the Department during the summer. You can do a Summer RA-ship with a faculty member, which typically involves working on philosophical projects, but can also consist in helping to organize the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME), which takes place every August. Summer RA-ships pay \$1,000 without work-study and have typically paid \$2,500 with work-study. The other way to earn money from the University over the summer is as a summer GPTI (i.e., teach a summer course). Summer GPTI-ships have usually paid around \$5,500.

The department offers some support for graduate student conference travel. For details regarding the policy and the application process, see the [Graduate Resources](#) page.

### **Financial Aid**

Students should take the opportunity to apply for financial aid each year, even if you do not end up accepting any loans. This means filling out [the FAFSA](#). Doing so allows you to be eligible for “[work-](#)



[study](#),” which allows you to earn money doing a job within the Department or in the University generally and would allow you to earn more money for the same work as a Summer RA (see the [Funding](#) page for information on Summer RA-ships in the Department). Work-study wages are subsidized by the government and so if you have work-study, you are a much more attractive employee – and so more likely to be hired – than if you don’t. To find out about work-study job opportunities available in the Department, contact the Program Assistant. If you are an M.A. student awarded work-study money, you should inquire whether any faculty member needs a grader. If you receive a work-study position, the Program Assistant can help you with the paperwork.

The [Office of Financial Aid](#) also has resources on [grants and scholarships](#) (University-wide, statewide, and nationwide).

Lastly, [student loans](#) are a possible resource for graduate students and are awarded through the Office of Financial Aid. The federal definition of ‘full-time student’ used to require that one take at least 9 credits (three courses) per semester to qualify for a student loan. *But this just changed to 6 credits.*

Given the salaries that professional philosophers typically make, however, it is advisable to leave graduate school with a minimal amount of debt. Before relying on loans to supplement a TA-ship, know that if you live frugally, it is possible to get by in Boulder on solely the standard TA stipend.

## 8. ESTABLISHING RESIDENCY

(Domestic Students Only)

If you establish Colorado residency, you will qualify for in-state tuition. Out-of-state tuition is significantly higher than in-state tuition. It is crucial to get your Colorado Residency as soon as possible. Unfunded M.A. students have an interest in getting residency because in-state tuition costs are substantially lower than out-of-state tuition costs. (Being “funded” means either that you have an appointment as a TA or GPTI or that you are on a fellowship that covers tuition and pays a stipend similar to that of a TA-ship or GPTI-ship.)

As for funded students (M.A. or Ph.D.), the Graduate School *requires* that any funded domestic student establish residency by the start of their second year. If a domestic student on continuing appointment has not established residency by the second year, they can still be on appointment, *but the University will not cover tuition for them.* That would be a massive financial blow.

For guidance on how to establish residency, please see the [Tuition Classification for Current Students](#) page on the Registrar’s website. Residency is a matter of state law; neither the Department nor the Graduate School has any influence on decisions, so you should adhere to Tuition Classification’s guidelines and contact them with any questions.

International students are not eligible for Colorado residency, but international students do not need to establish residency to continue to have their tuition covered while they are on appointment.

The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) is a benefit for residents of certain U.S. states and territories that allows students in qualified programs outside their home state to pay resident tuition. Participating programs and states are listed on the [WRGP website](#). Students who qualify under the WRGP program may receive a domicile exception for in-state tuition.

Students in the WRGP program don't have to establish residency because they are already charged tuition at in-state rates as part of that program. A student has to declare either WRGP or non-WRGP status at the start of their enrollment, and they can't change that partway through.

There is residency requirement for students on continuing appointment (as a TA or GPTI). An MA student who wasn't on appointment in their first year wouldn't have to establish residency in their second year in order to take a TA-ship that year. The timer starts only once they start being on appointment. So their being in the WRGP wouldn't hurt them were they offered a TA-ship. (The purpose behind the residency requirement is to ensure that the Grad School isn't covering out-of-state tuition for more than two semesters for students on appointment. So it's irrelevant for students not on appointment and/or not on continuing appointment for more than one year. International students can't establish residency, but aren't expected to.)

#### **Unofficial advice from a recent graduate student on establishing residency:**

“The residency paper is annoyingly involved – mostly so they can rule out undergrads who are trying to get the lower tuition that comes with residency while still actually depending on their out-of-state parents. Here are some things you’ll want to do:

- Listen through the online course and get a copy of the petition so you know what documentation you’ll need: <https://www.colorado.edu/registrar/students/state-residency/adult>
- Start collecting copies/scans of the required documentation (below) as you get it and store it all together to make assembling the petition paperwork easier. You can also enter the “dates completed” into the petition paperwork.
- When you get to CO, change your driver’s license (or non-driver ID) and car registration (if you have one) *right away*. My roommate and I both dragged our feet because we hated the idea of going to the DMV, but it turned out to be pretty quick and painless. But it’s still probably easier to get done before classes start. Make copies or scans of your new driver’s license and car registration. You’ll need them for the petition.
- Register to vote in CO. Print/scan/save a copy of your voter info for the petition. (You can look up voter registration online and see a verification.)
- Make a copy/scan of your signed lease for the petition.

- Make a note to yourself that you'll need copies/scans of the first 1-2 pages of your income-tax returns when you file in the spring.
- Make a note to yourself to complete and file your petition paperwork at the beginning of the filing window, which opens on March 1. Petitions are reviewed and residency changes made in the order received. If you get your paperwork in right away, you'll get a decision quickly and the change will process smoothly before fall tuition is charged to your account.

Again, please see the Tuition Classification for Current Students page for information about establishing residency and on what materials you will need to start gathering now in order to qualify for residency by the start of your second year in the program. Send all questions directly to them: residency is a matter of state law and they are the experts, as well as the ones who will determine your status.”

## 9. DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

### **Faculty/Graduate-Student Mentoring Program**

Our department has a (fairly informal) faculty/graduate-student mentoring program. The general idea is to pair each incoming graduate student with a faculty member who will give the student advice, answer questions, and remain in regular contact with the student throughout their initial years in the Department (until the student has identified a thesis advisor). Typically, this involves meeting up for coffee about once a semester, but it can involve more. It makes sense to have a mentor whose philosophical interests are similar to your own, perhaps even someone likely to direct your M.A. or Ph.D. thesis when the time comes, but this is not required. The faculty mentor will try to answer the mentee's questions about the profession, about the mentee's philosophical direction, about how the Department or the profession works. How long it continues is up to you. You will be asked by the DGS to name some faculty members you're interested in being assigned to.

### **Graduate School Professional Development & Community Program**

Although the name doesn't make it obvious, the Graduate School's [Professional Development & Community Program](#) offers a number of workshops and seminars that are designed to help graduate students succeed during their time in graduate school. One of their programs is the [Grad+ Seminar Series](#), which is designed to help graduate students hone their habits and routines so they can finish on time with a minimum of (di)stress. Seminar participants meet weekly in groups of 10-20 to learn about habit formation, attention and focus, time management, and wellbeing. After a short presentation, attendees discuss their goals, plans, and progress with one another and a coach who can provide guidance and support as needed. Since seminar participants come from departments all across campus,

it's a great opportunity to meet new people and get an outside perspective on problems and issues that many graduate students face.

### **Peer Mentoring Program**

The Graduate School's [Peer Mentoring Program](#) pairs incoming students with continuing students, usually in different programs. A nice way to meet people and get an outside perspective on issues.

### **The Center for Values and Social Policy**

The Philosophy Department is home to the [Center for Values and Social Policy](#). The Center organizes our "Center Talks," Fridays at lunchtime. These are usually followed by a Faculty/Graduate-Student lunch at the University Memorial Center (UMC). The Center also organizes conferences, workshops, and panels throughout the year.

### **The Graduate Student Lounge (Muenzinger D120)**

This is a dedicated space for philosophy graduate students to hang out or work. It has a refrigerator, coffee machine, couches, and a printer for use by GPTIs. Right now, we share our lounge with the English and History department.

### **The Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado (POPCO)**

[The Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado](#) is a 25+-year-old program run by the graduate students in Philosophy. All philosophy graduate students are welcome and encouraged to be POPCO instructors. POPCO instructors are paid and require no special training. As an instructor you can share your interest and expertise by leading a philosophical discussion with a group of non-philosophers. During the academic year POPCO visits K-12 classrooms in the area at the teacher's invitation and year-round hosts monthly reading/discussion groups through Boulder Public Library and Longmont Public Library. To learn more about POPCO's current projects and whom to contact to get involved, see <https://www.colorado.edu/cvsp/programs/popco>.

## **10. DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES**

The Department offers numerous talks, events, and conferences throughout the year for faculty and graduate students. These are for your intellectual and professional development. You should treat the Departmental Colloquia (see below) as a fairly firm obligation, as well as Graduate-Work-In-Progress (GWIP) Talks and the Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference (RMPC). After that, go to talks that interest you. *Talks and events are how we build community here.* It's also part of your education – you

will learn what kind of topics are “hot,” what philosophers are publishing, what a work-in-progress talk looks like, what the standards of the profession are, and so forth.

### **Departmental Colloquia**

The Department sponsors a [colloquium series](#) in which philosophers from around the globe deliver papers and rub elbows with the faculty and graduate students. We usually have about three colloquia per semester. Speakers generally have time to meet with graduate students, and there are opportunities to have lunch or dinner with the speakers. It is customary for interested graduate students to have lunch with the colloquium speaker before their talk. Department colloquia are almost always held on Friday afternoons, so it is a good idea to keep this time slot free if possible. Attendance is expected unless you are assigned teaching during this hour. Go to the talks and don't be afraid to ask a question!

### **Graduate-Work-In-Progress (GWIP) Talks**

Graduate-Work-In-Progress talks provide an opportunity for graduate students to learn more about each other's research interests and receive and provide feedback in an informal, friendly setting. Attendance and participation is very strongly encouraged. Support your fellow graduate students! Attendance is also limited to graduate students, unless the presenter wishes to invite certain specific faculty members.

### **Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference (RMPC)**

Every year, the graduate students in the philosophy department organize a student conference featuring one or more well-known keynote speakers and a number of invited paper presentations from graduate students at other institutions. The RMPC provides students here with the opportunity to select papers for presentation, comment on papers that are presented, and meet graduate students from other schools. Several graduate students, determined at the spring graduate meeting, lead the organizing efforts. All graduate students are expected to contribute to the conference in some form or another, even if just by refereeing submissions and attending sessions.

### **Graduate Teaching Enrichment Community (GTEC)**

This is a teaching check-in/workshop series run by philosophy graduate students for philosophy graduate students. It meets about three times per semester. Its goal is to provide a space for graduate students to swap stories, trade tips, and otherwise build a community of support around teaching. Faculty members are usually invited to give workshops on specific teaching topics, determined by graduate student interest, during the second half of each meeting. GTEC meetings are required for all first-year PhD students and all MA students who are slated to TA. They are strongly encouraged for all graduate students.

## **Center Talks**

The Center for Values and Social Policy sponsors [Friday Lunchtime Talks](#), also known as ‘Center Talks’, most Fridays in the Morris Reading Room. These talks are given by resident faculty in philosophy and other related departments, advanced graduate students, and various visiting speakers and scholars. The whole session is just an hour. Attendance at these talks is highly encouraged, especially for students who work in values, and provides an opportunity for a fairly relaxed discussion of various topics in ethics and social/political philosophy.

## **Morris Colloquium**

Every year, the Bertram Morris Fund and the Center sponsor the [Morris Colloquium](#), which typically takes the form of a multi-day conference on campus on a selected topic. The Morris Colloquium features a number of top philosophers from around the country or the world, and attendance is highly encouraged.

## **Think! Public Lecture Series**

The Center, with the generous support of The Collins Foundation, also sponsors a public lecture series. [Think! Talks](#) are geared toward a wider community audience and provide a forum for the philosophical discussion of current issues, usually related to ethical and social/political concerns.

## **Publication Workshop**

The Department offers a workshop about once a year to help teach graduate students about publishing in philosophy – the process, the journals and their reputations, tips for increasing the likelihood that your work is publishable, and so on.

## **Teaching Workshops**

The Department offers fairly regular workshops to help philosophy graduate students become better teachers. Recent workshops have covered: how to think about the overall goals of your course; how to pick course topics and readings; the selection and use of assessment tools (quizzes, exams, homeworks, papers); how to create and manage discussions in your classes; assignments and grading. If you are pursuing the [Certificate in College Teaching](#), you can use these workshops to count towards the required 20 real-time hours of teacher training in their discipline.

## **Committee on the History and Philosophy of Science (CHPS)**

The [Committee on the History and Philosophy of Science](#) seeks to bring together scholars from the sciences and the humanities to promote cross-disciplinary communication and facilitate work done in both areas. CHPS (pronounced 'chips') sponsors inter-departmental talks within the university; invites distinguished speakers from other institutions; and holds an annual conference attended by regional, national, and international scholars. Graduate students are encouraged to attend CHPS events. Additionally, graduate students who wish to gain experience organizing talks and conferences, particularly those with an interest in philosophy of science, are encouraged to reach out to the chair of CHPS (currently Prof. Heather Demarest) to learn how to get involved.

## **Reading Groups**

At any given time, there are a number of reading groups going on in the department. Reading groups range from informal to formal, general to specific, depending on the interests of those involved in arranging them. Recent reading groups have focused on such diverse topics as applied ethics, global justice, Nietzsche, metaphysics, communitarianism, Chinese and Indian philosophy, the philosophy of color, and the philosophy of music. These are typically organized by email on the departmental listservs.

## **Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME)**

The department hosts the [Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress \(RoME\)](#), one of the premier ethics conferences in Anglo-American philosophy. RoME takes place in early August and usually has about 150 attendees, including some of the leading philosophers in ethics. Students are highly encouraged to attend and will have the opportunity to comment on papers in their later years in the program. If you are interested in helping out, contact Prof. Alastair Norcross.

## **Minorities and Philosophy (MAP)**

The Department hosts a chapter of [Minorities and Philosophy \(MAP\)](#). MAP is a graduate-student-led organization that aims to make philosophy more inclusive through advocacy and resource-building. Over 140 autonomous MAP chapters at philosophy departments around the world organize local academic, professional, and social programming to support students from underrepresented backgrounds or students who have interests in under-researched areas of philosophy. Among other things, CU Boulder's MAP chapter coordinates a philosophy mentoring program, sponsors guest speakers, leads extracurricular reading groups, and organizes workshops. Getting involved in MAP is a great way to find community and access resources for succeeding in philosophy.

# **11. OTHER CENTERS ON CAMPUS**

As if this were not enough, there are several Centers on campus with activities and programs and even fellowships that you should know about.

### **Center for Humanities & the Arts (CHA)**

The [CHA](#) is a hub for many programs and activities related to the humanities and the arts. Check their page for events and programs that are of interest. They organize and sponsor some graduate-student fellowships.

### **Center for the Study of Origins (CSO)**

The [Center for the Study of Origins](#) fosters interdisciplinary investigations into specific topics on origins and transdisciplinary research into the general nature (structure, justification, and function) of theories of origins, including ways in which they are used to understand the present and envision the future. The director is Philosophy Professor Carol Cleland. The CSO has supported philosophy graduate students in the past with RA-ships and other funding.

### **Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization**

[The Benson Center](#) is devoted to the study of Western civilization and sponsors interdisciplinary talks and events focusing on moral and political issues of our time. The Director is Philosophy Professor Daniel Jacobson. One cool source of funding from them is their support for language study. If you want to spend the summer learning Greek or Latin, for example, you can apply to them for funding to take a class or hire a tutor.

### **Center for Teaching & Learning**

The [Center for Teaching & Learning](#) is here to support all of us as university teachers through free [consultations](#), [teaching resources](#), [programs](#), [seminars](#), [workshops](#), and [other events](#). They also offer the [Certificate in College Teaching](#), discussed above.

## **12. E-MAIL AND THE CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM**

### **IdentiKey**

Before your first semester begins, you should establish your [IdentiKey](#) (your CU Boulder login name and password) and e-mail account through the University. Once you establish your IdentiKey, you will be able to access a number of important University resources, including:



- [The Buff Portal](#), the campus portal to what you need to access as a CU Boulder student, such as:
  - GPA/class & grade history
  - [classes.colorado.edu](http://classes.colorado.edu), where you can register for classes
  - Current tuition/fees bill
  - Work study application and info, plus hourly reporting form for work study (also available through myCUinfo [see below])
  - Health Portal (for [CAPS](#) and [Wardenburg](#) appointments and so forth)
- [myCUinfo](#), the campus portal to what you need to access as a CU Boulder employee (most CU Philosophy graduate students are also CU employees), such as:
  - rosters and grade submissions for classes that you are teaching or TA-ing
  - pay stubs
  - direct deposit setup;
  - benefits enrollment;
  - trainings.
- [myCUhealth](#), the portal to manage your private healthcare information online
- [G Suite](#), which includes Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Hangout, Google Docs, Google Drive, and more;
- [University Libraries](#). Accessing some online library holdings requires either being on campus or on CU Boulder's [Virtual Private Network \(VPN\)](#).

For more information on how to set up your IdentiKey account, as well as information on other neat things you can do with campus technology, see [Getting Started with Campus Technology](#).

## Listservs

There is a departmental listserv that goes to all philosophy graduate students: “**phil-grad**.” The Graduate Program Assistant will automatically get you on to phil-grad. *Many faculty are on phil-grad as well, because it enables them to send to the list, so be mindful about what you yourself send to it.*

There are departmental norms governing the use of phil-grad. These have not been codified, but here are some examples to give you a sense:

### Acceptable uses of phil-grad:

- ✓ Announcing events and opportunities that are relevant to the listserv's members in their roles as graduate students in philosophy (though also consider using News & Notes for this [see section 2 above])
- ✓ Posting requests for teaching or class-related help (e.g., someone to cover your class, or information about some policy, or recommendations for something you need help with).
- ✓ Announcing social events that all graduate students are invited to. These should be appropriate and conform to the general principles of our [Best Practices](#).

### Inappropriate uses of phil-grad:

- × Flaming – i.e., posting insults or personal, gratuitous attacks on other students. These would be messages intended to upset others, or messages that could reasonably be expected to upset others.
- × Discussion of controversial or tendentious topics that are best reserved for face-to-face discussion.
- × Exhortations to support some political cause.
- × Emails that violate the letter or spirit of our [Best Practices](#).

If you are posting something to phil-grad that you would like faculty to see, ask Karen or Alex to forward it to either **phil-fac** (which consists of philosophy TT faculty and philosophy Instructors) or **phil-teach** (which has everyone phil-fac has plus Lecturers and some faculty in other departments who teach some PHIL courses). **phil-ta** and **phil-gpti** are for TAs and GPTIs respectively, though these are less active than phil-grad. Alex Flaherty will automatically add you to and remove you from these as appropriate.

There is a more informal and totally unofficial graduate-student listserv called **Phil-Soc** ([Phil-Soc@googlegroups.com](mailto:Phil-Soc@googlegroups.com)), which is run by philosophy graduate students for philosophy graduate students. *No faculty are on this listserv*. It is an opt-in listserv; contact your Graduate Student Presidents to be added. Phil-Soc can be used for more informal purposes, for example, to find someone to feed your cat while you're away, to sell something or give it away, to ask for help moving, or to inform everyone that your band is playing in town.

Two other Department listservs to be aware of:

**phil-culture** is a forum to talk about cultural and entertainment topics of all kinds, high and low, local and global. This is opt-in; contact Alex Beard to get on it.

**phil-discuss** is a place to send out queries and comments about all things philosophical, focusing on substantive philosophical problems but also open to questions about what to read on some topic, questions about teaching, and more practical concerns still, such as, for example, how to handle a revise-and-resubmit from a journal. Phil-discuss should not be used to debate politics or other charged topics. This is opt-in; contact Alex Beard to get on it.

Don't forget to send announcements about philosophy events or professional achievements to "News and Notes," which Alex Beard sends out every Monday during the academic year.

## 13. HOUSING

Finding affordable housing in Boulder is a challenge. There are several resources to help you. The University Memorial Center (UMC) has an [Off-Campus Housing](#) office (Room 313; [Facebook page](#)) which provides lists of current off-campus rentals. There is a bulletin board on the first floor of the UMC where housing opportunities are posted. Here you can also find postings for furniture, computers, etc.

Off-Campus Housing runs an online rental database called [Ralphie's List](#) where students can search available properties year-round. Their "roommate finder" can be especially helpful. You are encouraged to use phil-grad to ask for or offer recommendations, housing opportunities, roommates, and the like.

The University offers its own fairly affordable housing. On-campus housing includes dormitory rooms; job positions in dormitories where housing, food, and pay are part of the deal; and graduate-student housing for single and married students. Graduate-student housing and married-student housing are rent controlled and located near campus. For single graduate students there is a substantial waiting list. Married student housing generally has a shorter list and the marriage requirements are not very strict. The [Graduate & Family Housing Office](#) is at 1350 20th St., south of Arapahoe.

In addition, the Department created an continually growing [Google Doc](#) containing housing advice for incoming philosophy graduate students from current and recent philosophy graduate students. The thought is that current students will freely add to it as they have advice to share.

Here are some additional University links that might be useful for finding housing and on getting to know the area:

<https://www.colorado.edu/offcampus/finding-housing/living-boulder>  
<https://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/admitted-students/housing>  
<https://www.colorado.edu/living/graduate-students>  
<https://www.colorado.edu/discover/boulder-campus>.

## **14. GENERAL UNSOLICITED ADVICE FROM RECENT GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Finally, here are a few miscellaneous bits of advice that current and past graduate students would like to share from their experiences here.

"Although this is a highly competitive program, most incoming students find that the graduate students are supportive of each other's endeavors. Perhaps the crucial element to student survival is

the relations among the students in the Department. You will find a variety of personalities and interests among the students, but most of all, you will find students concerned for each other's interests, welfare, and success. Especially for incoming students, your best resource will likely be the other students. Do not hesitate to ask someone for help or information: we all know what it is like to be entering this program.”

“The value of establishing rapport with faculty members cannot be overstated. The faculty has expressed a growing interest in developing mentor relations with students. You should take advantage of their interest. In the long run, staying informed by the DGS and having a strong professional contact with faculty will be to your advantage.”

“Each new graduate student is assigned a Faculty Mentor at the start of the semester. You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this mentor – it gives you an excuse to get to know someone on the faculty, and this is the only kind of official advisor (except for the DGS) you will have until you pick a Dissertation or Thesis Advisor. A mentor also may be of real help as an advocate for a student, even in cases where the student turns out to specialize in an area far from the mentor’s areas of interest.”

“As mentor relations and possibilities develop, keeping in mind potential members for your thesis/dissertation committee is a good move. It should be noted, however, that very rarely does someone enter the Program knowing his or her thesis/dissertation topic. You should not feel that during your first year you need to have this issue settled. Commonly, students change research directions during their graduate career. Mentors are often the source of these research shifts, and sometimes the impetus for creating thesis/dissertation topics.”

“Be social with folks in the department! You don’t have to be best friends with everyone, but odds are there are many folks you’ll enjoy getting to know. Definitely get to know your cohort.”

“Make friends with people who have nothing to do with the Department or the University. You will need a break from your colleagues/the discipline/academia.”

“Have something meaningful in your life outside the Department. We all have rough patches at times, and you don’t want your whole life to be rough if your academic program currently is. It could be a sport, music, non-academic friend group, whatever, but have something non-philosophy in your life.”

“Play around with various work/study situations that work for you. You might find you write early drafts well in loud coffee shops, but can only close-edit in a library-quiet environment. You might lose focus by 5pm, or you might really get going when the sun goes down. Realize that your work/study needs might be different than your peers, as well as different for different sorts of work. Experiment early. And realize that your work habits and dispositions are at least as important to your ability to produce good philosophy as your ideas are.”

“Even if you think you know what you want to focus your research/dissertation on, play around with other areas too. Be open to not only new arguments but new areas of research.”

“Know the university’s resources. Our [mental health services](#) are very good. The [Office of Victim’s Assistance](#) is a lifesaver if you experience a traumatic event or need help navigating the university’s Title IX process. If you are having a serious conflict with faculty, administration, etc., call the [Ombuds Office](#). They provide off-the-record, confidential, impartial guidance.”

“The function of Ph.D. students at CU is to do the first- and second-year teaching. Almost everything in the university, and the department, is arranged so you get your teaching (or TAing) done first, and see to your own research in any time left over. But hey, you’re going to have to teach on the tenure track too, so why not get used to balancing? To help with your research productivity, sign up for the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity: <https://www.facultydiversity.org/>. They have several good writing programs (like a 14-day-writing challenge), and a very helpful dissertation success program. Their offerings are based on research on faculty productivity.”

“There is an over-reliance on peer instruction both within the department and in the university more broadly (student working groups, student-to-student teaching instruction, etc.) – probably because our time is “free,” and those with expertise have better things to do. Lap up any opportunities to learn from faculty, and be wary of taking teaching, publication, or other professional advice from those at your own experience level.”

“CU has a labor union, [United Campus Workers Colorado](#), and you should join it. UCW organizes to create better working conditions for graduate students. Their current push is to eliminate \$2k in annual graduate student fees, although they do other work around benefits, compensation, and university services as well. Speaking of which: every semester a bunch of graduate students on stipend don’t get their first paycheck due to ‘administrative errors’.”

“Graduate students are allowed to take Incompletes in the event that they are unable (or unwilling) to complete the course load during a semester, but it is preferable to avoid Incompletes if possible. If you do take an Incomplete, it is wise to finish the coursework as soon as possible after the semester has ended. The requirements for Incompletes vary from professor to professor.”

“Do not overlook the slash courses as an option in areas in which you have less expertise. During the first semester, it is a good idea to get acclimated, take in the workings of the Department, and learn how to pace yourself for the expectations of this Department.”

“Many grad students agree that one crucial thing for survival is having a good rapport with at least one member of the graduate faculty. This person acts not only as a mentor, but also as a representative or advocate for your work and academic progress, especially in the year-end faculty meeting in which the progress of each Ph.D. student is discussed. As it takes some time to establish this kind of relationship,

introduce yourself to faculty members in your field of interest. The relationship you establish with faculty members is invaluable. The responsibility of establishing faculty-student relations obviously falls to both faculty and students. However, the value of pursuing these relations on your part should not be underestimated. One way to do this is simply to *show up* — i.e., attend department talks, participate in department post-talk social events (e.g., lunches after Center Talks, receptions after colloquium talks), all of which provide you with opportunities to talk to faculty about their research and talk to them about your own interests. If you find these kinds of social events intimidating or difficult, another thing you can do is to *go to their office hours* to talk about either their work or your work. You may come from a background (whether cultural or institutional) in which professors and students exist in a very hierarchical relationship; it may initially be difficult to interact in a more informal way with professors. But remember that in this department, professors go by their first name and are willing to meet informally.”

“Go to conferences! Get to know speakers – ask them not only about their talk, but about their work, what their students are doing, etc. Ask them for advice and get to know them. You might end up asking one of them to be the external member of your thesis committee.”

“Once you have a good paper, submit it to graduate-student conferences, as well as to the APA divisional meetings. Talk to your advisor or mentor about when a paper might be ready to submit for publication. Also, you have to submit your papers to journals, while being okay with rejection. It’s part of the process. (More will be said about this in the publication workshops that are given every year.)”