



Official M.A. Program Requirements

last updated 7/13/21

1. Coursework:

- a. For the Thesis Option, students must complete a minimum of 30 hours of approved graduate study (typically eight courses plus six thesis hours) at the 5000 level or above. For the Non-Thesis Option, students must complete a minimum of 36 hours of approved graduate study at the 5000 level or above.
- b. To provide a common experience in their first year, all incoming M.A. students are required to take in their first year the Values Proseminar (PHIL 5100), typically offered in the fall semester, and the Metaphysics and Epistemology Proseminar (PHIL 5550), typically offered in the spring semester. These are closed-admission proseminars, open only to first-year M.A. and Ph.D. students in Philosophy.
- c. No more than 9 hours of PHIL 5810 (Special Topics) may be counted toward the 30-hour or 36-hour requirement.
- d. No more than 6 hours of PHIL 5840 (Independent Study) may be counted toward the 30-hour or 36-hour requirement. Students must receive permission in advance from the Director of Graduate Studies to take 5840 (see Non-Regular Courses: Policies and Applications).
- e. For the Thesis Option, between 4 and 6 hours must be PHIL 6950 (Master's Thesis). No thesis hours are required for the Non-Thesis Option.
- f. For the Thesis Option, at least 18 hours must be Philosophy courses (PHIL 6940 and PHIL 6950 do not count as courses for this purpose). For the Non-Thesis Option, at least 24 hours must be Philosophy courses. Students must receive permission in advance to take non-Philosophy courses for degree credit. (See Non-Regular Courses: Policies and Applications.)
- g. No more than 9 hours of credit may be transferred into the program from other graduate programs. Students who enter the M.A. program already holding an M.A. degree may not transfer into the program any credits that applied toward the M.A. degree already held. All credit transfers must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

2. Distribution Requirements:

Students must demonstrate competence in the core areas of Philosophy, by passing with a grade of B or better, appropriate graduate or upper-division courses (possibly not for credit, as auditors) in each of the following three areas:

- a. *History of Philosophy*, either *Ancient* or *Modern* (one course). Courses that fulfill this requirement:

- PHIL 5010 - Single Philosopher
- PHIL 5020 - Topics in the History of Philosophy
- PHIL 6000 - Seminar in the History of Philosophy

when those courses are on a philosopher or topic in either ancient philosophy (5th c. BC through Augustine) or early modern philosophy (17th-18th c., roughly from Descartes to Kant). Some courses, such as PHIL 5800 (Open Topics in Philosophy), are sometimes taught in a way that emphasizes historical readings and methods; when such a course is in the area of ancient or early modern philosophy, it may count for the history distribution requirement, subject to approval from the Director of Graduate Studies.

b. *Metaphysics and Epistemology* (one course). Courses that fulfill this requirement:

- PHIL 5300 - Philosophy of Mind
- PHIL 5340 - Epistemology
- PHIL 5360 - Metaphysics
- PHIL 5370 - Free Will and Determinism
- PHIL 5400 - Philosophy of Science
- PHIL 5490 - Philosophy of Language
- PHIL 5550 - Metaphysics and Epistemology Proseminar
- PHIL 6300 - Seminar in Philosophy of Mind
- PHIL 6340 - Seminar in Epistemology
- PHIL 6380 - Seminar in Metaphysics
- PHIL 6400 - Seminar in Philosophy of Science
- PHIL 6490 - Seminar in Philosophy of Language
- others upon approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Courses that are primarily historical do not fulfill the requirement, nor does PHIL 5600 (Philosophy of Religion).

c. *Values* (one course). Courses that fulfill this requirement:

- PHIL 5100 – Ethics (including when run as the Values Proseminar)
- PHIL 5110 - Contemporary Moral Theory
- PHIL 5120 - Philosophy and Animals
- PHIL 5150 - Topics in Applied Ethics
- PHIL 5200 - Contemporary Political Philosophy
- PHIL 5210 - Philosophy and Social Policy
- PHIL 5230 - Bioethics and Public Policy
- PHIL 5240 - Seminar in Environmental Philosophy
- PHIL 5260 - Philosophy of Law
- PHIL 5290 - Topics in Values and Social Policy
- PHIL 5470 - Probability and Rational Choice
- PHIL 5700 - Aesthetics
- PHIL 6100 - Seminar in Ethics
- PHIL 6200 - Seminar in Social and Political Philosophy

- others upon approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

3. Logic:

Students must demonstrate competence in logic by earning a grade of B– or better in PHIL 2440 (Symbolic Logic), or an equivalent course, or in some more advanced logic course. Students may satisfy this requirement either by taking all the examinations in PHIL 2440 and averaging at least a B– or by earning at least a B– on the comprehensive final examination offered in that course each semester. Students may be exempted from this requirement by the Director of Graduate Studies if they have done suitable work in formal logic at other institutions, or in other departments at CU Boulder.

4. Thesis and Oral Defense:

After finding a faculty member willing to direct their thesis, student doing the Thesis Option must prepare a thesis plan acceptable to their Thesis Advisor and proceed to write the thesis, working as closely as necessary with the Advisor. At the appropriate time, the Thesis Committee, which consists of the Thesis Advisor plus two additional faculty members, will convene to hold a final oral defense of the thesis. A copy of the thesis must be furnished to each committee member at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date of the defense.

5. Non-Thesis M.A.:

The Department will award a Non-Thesis M.A. to any student who has completed 36 credits of graduate-level coursework (typically twelve courses) with a B+ average or better. At least 24 hours of coursework (typically eight courses) must be in Philosophy. Students must receive permission in advance to take non-Philosophy courses for degree credit (see Non-Regular Courses: Policies and Applications). The student must also meet the Distribution and Logic Requirements. Standard restrictions on the number of credits earned from Special Topics and from Independent Study also apply. Transfer courses applied toward the Ph.D. *cannot* count toward the Non-Thesis M.A.

6. Normal Progress and Readmission to the M.A. Program:

A master's student who is not enrolled in courses and has not been enrolled for six consecutive regular semesters (fall and spring) must successfully petition to remain in the master's program, prior to recommencing formal work toward the degree (that is, prior to enrolling in any courses, signing up for thesis hours, or scheduling a thesis defense). The petition will take the form of a substantial letter explaining the circumstances surrounding the student's separation from the program and making a case that the student is now in a position to complete the degree in a timely manner. Petitions will be reviewed by the Graduate Curriculum Committee. Any student whose petition is approved may enroll in classes or schedule a thesis defense in the semester immediately following approval or in the semester immediately following that one. (If the student does not enroll or defend in

either of those semesters, the student must file a new petition if the student wishes to recommence formal work toward the degree.) A student whose petition is denied is allowed to re-apply to the graduate program, via the standard procedure, without any loss of credit from work previously done, if the student is readmitted.