History and Philosophy of Science, PhD

This program offers you a unique opportunity to study the history and philosophy of science while embedded among biologists within ASU’s School of Life Sciences. You can benefit from participating in the university's interdisciplinary culture and integrating coursework from the sciences into your education.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD History and Philosophy of Science
The history and philosophy of science is an interdisciplinary field that traces its origin to foundational works such as Thomas Kuhn's "Structure of Scientific Revolutions." The field is based on the idea that the best way to understand science is to study how it changes over time, along with careful analysis of its concepts and fundamental principles.

The PhD program in history and philosophy of science combines training in the core areas of history and philosophy of science with an emphasis on interdisciplinary studies of the sciences, including:

- computational history and philosophy of science
- foundations of evolutionary theory
- general philosophy of science and epistemology
- history and philosophy of applied ethics and science policy
- history of 19th and 20th century biology

The program is especially appropriate for students with an undergraduate or master's degree in philosophy, history, or the sciences and for those who seek to broaden their disciplinary studies. Science students who have not taken relevant undergraduate humanistic core courses can make up these courses during their first years in the program.

At a Glance
Degree Requirements

84 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, an oral comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation

Required Core (6 credit hours)
HPS 615 Biology and Society Lab (3)
HPS 620 Research Prospectus Writing (3)

Restricted Program Electives (30 credit hours)

Program Electives (24 credit hours)

Research (12 credit hours)
HPS 792 Research (12)

Dissertation (12 credit hours)
HPS 799 Dissertation (12)

Additional Curriculum Information
An individual student program is developed in consultation with the student's advisor and committee.

HPS 615 Biology and Society Lab is a one credit hour course focused on student presentations of works-in-progress. Students must register for it three times during their graduate study.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree from a regionally accredited institution of recognized standing in a related field such as history, philosophy, or history and philosophy of science as well as a demonstrated background and interest in one or more sciences.

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:
1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. academic record form
4. personal statement
5. curriculum vitae or resume
6. writing sample
7. three letters of recommendation
8. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency regardless of their current residency.

Tuition Information
When it comes to paying for college, everyone’s situation is different. Students can learn about ASU tuition and financial aid options to find out which will work best for them.

Career Opportunities
A doctorate in history and philosophy of science provides strong preparation for academic careers at every level from community colleges to research universities, including research, teaching and administration, and science communication. The skills and knowledge obtained in this program are also valuable for government careers in federal and state agencies responsible for management and conservation, and for careers in industry and nongovernmental organizations.

Career examples include:

- food, agriculture and health care scientists in academic, private and industrial labs
- principal investigators and policymakers in government labs and nonprofit organizations
- professors or instructors in universities and colleges
- science teachers in elementary and high schools
- wildlife, animal and conservation scientists

Contact Information
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