Philosophy, PhD

With access to top philosophical thinkers, you can earn an interdisciplinary doctorate in your choice of fields, such as law, medicine, religion and politics, that enables you to make an impact on the world.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Philosophy
The School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies offers a newly redesigned PhD program in philosophy.

General areas of research include ethics, political philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of law, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, philosophy of religion and the history of philosophy. The program features a focus on practical and applied philosophy and an interdisciplinary coursework component related to the student's research topic.

Practical philosophy includes the fields of ethics, philosophy of law, social and political philosophy, feminist ethics and political philosophy.

Applied philosophy includes the application of theories developed within any of the subdisciplines of philosophy to everyday problems or phenomena, such as the application of the philosophy of language in relation to hate speech or the philosophy of mind in relation to computing and artificial intelligence. Applied philosophy also includes the application of research produced by methods used in other disciplines in order for the student to understand and address philosophical questions, like the application of data-gathering instruments used in psychology to answer questions in experimental philosophy.

Students may design dissertation projects in any of the major subfields of philosophy. For their interdisciplinary coursework supporting the dissertation project, students might, for example, pursue a certificate in social transformation, gender studies, responsible innovation in sciences, or engineering and society.

Members of the faculty are involved in interdisciplinary work in a variety of fields and enjoy close ties with the Lincoln Center for Applied Ethics, the College of Law and a number of other graduate programs at the university. The ASU philosophy faculty group sponsors an active colloquium series and regular
philosophical conferences on diverse topics. The Lincoln Center for Applied Ethics also sponsors a wide range of activities, including large-scale conferences, distinguished visitors and support for graduate study.

At a Glance

- **College/School**: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- **Location**: Tempe

Degree Requirements

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

**Required Core Areas (15 credit hours)**
- applied philosophy (3)
- epistemology (3)
- formal methods (3)
- metaphysics (3)
- value theory (3)

**Electives (45 credit hours)**

**Research (12 credit hours)**
PHI 792 Research (12)

**Culminating Experience (12 credit hours)**
PHI 799 Dissertation (12)

**Additional Curriculum Information**
Students should see the academic unit for the list of courses approved for each required core area.

In completing the electives requirements, at least nine credit hours and no more than 18 credit hours must be from other disciplines supporting the student's proposed dissertation area; 30 credit hours from a previously awarded master's degree may apply toward this requirement with approval by the student's supervisory committee and the Graduate College.

To ensure breadth in the traditional areas of philosophy, students must pass with a grade of "B" or better (3.00 on a 4.00 scale).
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, in any field, from a regionally accredited institution.

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. statement of purpose
4. curriculum vitae
5. writing sample
6. three letters of recommendation
7. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information

An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency, a copy of an article or research paper in their native or principal research language, as well as the English writing sample required of all students regardless of their current residency. The philosophy program requires a TOEFL iBT score of at least 100, or 7.0 on the IELTS.

The statement of purpose should explain the applicant's scholarly background and training, career goals, the primary field the applicant wishes to pursue, and the proposed research specialization (no more than 600 words in length).

The writing sample must be a piece of philosophical writing, preferably a seminar paper or published article of no more than 20 pages.

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.

Application Deadlines

Fall

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Program Learning Outcomes

Program learning outcomes identify what a student will learn or be able to do upon completion of their program. This program has the following program outcomes:

- Achieve competence with philosophical literature and writing
- Achieve professional-level skills in mastering literature and philosophical writing
- Able to identify and articulate a philosophical problem or question in one of the core areas in philosophy --- that is, metaphysics, epistemology and value theory

Career Opportunities

Both the MA and doctoral programs in philosophy help students develop and hone skills that are highly marketable and easily transferable.

Philosophy teaches its students to think critically, creatively and imaginatively. Though routine jobs are increasingly being lost to advances in automation and artificial intelligence, these skills are irreplaceable by technology, highly sought-after by employers, and transferrable from one occupation to another. They are the ability to read closely and with a critical eye; to analyze complex problems and identify all the possible solutions, including some creative solutions; to assess the merits of each possible solution; and to articulate and argue for or against various possible solutions in clear, precise and unambiguous language.

As philosophy focuses on honing certain skills rather than acquiring a particular body of knowledge, philosophy prepares its students for a wide variety of careers rather than for just one particular occupation. Indeed, philosophy prepares its students for any career requiring problem-solving; clear, critical and creative thinking; and excellent reading, writing and communication skills.

The program is designed to prepare students for careers as philosophers, as teachers of philosophy and in areas in which they may benefit from advanced training in philosophy, such as law, civil service and publishing.

Career examples include:

- businessperson
- computer programmer
- counselor
- educator
- journalist
- lawyer
- politician
- public policy analyst
- publisher
- writer

Contact Information