Philosophy, PhD

With access to top philosophical thinkers, you can earn an interdisciplinary PhD degree that impacts many sectors of the world, including law, medicine, religion and politics.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Philosophy

The School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies offers a newly redesigned PhD program that focuses on practical and applied 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. 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.

The doctoral program in philosophy 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 both the application of theories developed within any of the subdisciplines of philosophy to everyday problems or phenomena (for example, 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 to understand and address philosophical questions (for example, 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, etc. 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.
At a Glance

• College/School: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
• Location: Tempe campus

Degree Requirements

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

Required Core Areas (18 credit hours)
applied philosophy (3)
epistemology (3)
formal methods (3)
history of philosophy (3)
metaphysics (3)
value theory (3)

Electives (42 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. Thirty 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" (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) or better.
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 of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (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. official GRE scores
4. statement of purpose
5. curriculum vitae
6. writing sample
7. three letters of recommendation
8. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must provide proof of English proficiency as well as a copy of an article or research paper in their native or principal research language in addition to the English writing sample required of all students. The philosophy program requires a TOEFL score of at least 600 (PBT) or 90 (iBT).

GRE scores should be no more than five years old. Official scores should be sent by the ETS to ASU using the university code 4007. The department code may be left blank or entered as 0000.

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 (no more than 20 pages).

Application Deadlines

Fall
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Contact Information

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