PHILOSOPHY - DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

The philosophy PhD program at CU Boulder consists of approximately 2.5 years of course work and 2.5 years of dissertation work, with 5 years of guaranteed funding. We are both a research and a teaching department; teaching appointments are not only the principal means of supporting graduate students, but are also the way we train graduate students for a career of teaching as well as doing research in philosophy.

Applicants for admission to the Graduate School for work toward a doctoral degree with a major in philosophy are expected to have had 18 or more credit hours in undergraduate courses in the subject.

Students in the doctoral programs must satisfy a variety of requirements, including the completion of course work. The department has a diversified faculty that can supervise the writing of doctoral dissertations on a wide range of topics. The department makes available a limited number of teaching assistantships and assists with job placement.

Students wishing to pursue graduate work in philosophy should note Graduate School requirements in the Doctoral Degree Requirements section and obtain a copy of the Graduate Program Rules from the department.

Requirements

The PhD requires 45 hours of approved graduate study, in addition to the 30 hours of dissertation credit hours required by the Graduate School. Twenty-seven of the 45 hours (equivalent to 9 courses) must satisfy departmental distribution requirements. Other requirements include a logic requirement, satisfactory completion of the third-semester diagnostic paper and fifth-semester qualifying paper, and successful prospects oral and dissertation defense.

No more than 21 hours of credit may be transferred into the program from graduate programs outside CU Boulder, or taken through the ACCESS program at CU Boulder. Credits that applied toward another PhD may not be transferred into this program. All credit transfers must be approved by the DGS. All philosophy courses taken at the 5000 level or above, if taken for the master’s degree at CU Boulder, may be applied toward the doctoral degree if they otherwise satisfy the requirements of the PhD program.

No more than 9 hours of credit toward the graduation requirement may be taken in courses outside the department. These courses must be at the graduate level. They should be relevant to the student’s main area of interest and approved by the student’s advisor and/or the grad advisor.

Students must earn an average of A- (minimum 3.66 on a 4-point scale) over any 9 hours in each of the following three areas: history of philosophy, metaphysics and epistemology, and value theory. Graduate Independent Study (PHIL 5840) may not count toward the distribution requirements.

Required Courses and Semester Credit Hours

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 8990</td>
<td>Doctoral Dissertation</td>
<td>30</td>
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Electives

Choose one course in classical philosophy. The topic must cover an ancient philosopher or subject in the period ranging from 5th century BC through Augustine.

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

Choose one course in modern philosophy. The topic must cover a philosopher or subject in the history of early modern philosophy (17th to 18th century).

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

Choose one open course. The topic must cover a philosopher or subject in the period ranging from classical Greece through 1950 (including the history of early analytic philosophy and the history of early 20th-century continental philosophy).

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

Three courses in metaphysics and epistemology.

- PHIL 5300 Philosophy of Mind
- PHIL 5340 Epistemology
- PHIL 5360 Metaphysics
- 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

Three courses in value theory.

- PHIL 5100 Ethics
- PHIL 5110 Contemporary Moral Theory
- 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 6100 Seminar in Ethics
- PHIL 6200 Seminar in Social and Political Philosophy

Total Credit Hours

57

Diagnostic Paper

During the first week of the third semester of study in the PhD program, each student who did not enter the program with two years of prior graduate work or with an MA degree in philosophy from elsewhere will submit a diagnostic paper in a core area of philosophy. It may be an expanded version of a paper written for a first-year class, and should be 4,500 to 7,000 words in length.

In the case of students who are entering the program with two years of prior graduate work or with an MA degree in philosophy from elsewhere, a 4,500- to 7,000-word diagnostic paper must be submitted during
the student’s first semester in the PhD program. This can be a paper produced for a course at CU Boulder.

In either case, a committee composed of three members specializing in the appropriate area and appointed by the graduate director will evaluate the work and alert students to any problems or difficulties.

Students entering our PhD program with an MA in philosophy from CU Boulder are exempt from this requirement.

**Prospectus and Oral Examination**

After passing the qualifying paper, students must assemble a prospectus committee of five members of the department, with a clearly designated chair. Students must submit a written prospectus to this committee, which, after judging the prospectus acceptable, will conduct an oral exam concerning this prospectus and related topics.

**Dissertation and Oral Defense**

Students must write a dissertation that is acceptable to the dissertation committee and defend the dissertation in a public, oral defense at a time deemed appropriate by the committee.

**Recommended Plan of Study**

Ideally, PhD students in their first two years will take and complete three courses per semester, for a total of 12 courses (36 credit hours) by the end of the second year. The minimum number of courses PhD students can take to make good progress in the first two years of the program is five courses per year.

At the beginning of the third semester in the program, students turn in a diagnostic paper, with feedback from three faculty members.

At the beginning of the fifth semester in the program, students turn in the fifth-semester qualifying paper, which will be evaluated anonymously; this is a qualifying event that the student must pass in order to be considered for advancement to candidacy in the PhD program.

In the fifth semester, students continue to take courses in order to complete the required 45 hours of course work (15 courses). Ideally, students should have completed course work by the end of their fifth semester and should begin work on the prospectus.

Students should defend their work in a prospectus oral exam sometime in their sixth semester. Students are eligible to sign up for up to 10 dissertation hours before they pass their prospectus exam.

The remainder of the required 30 dissertation hours are used in the fourth and fifth years in the program while completing the dissertation.