

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

**GRADUATE PROGRAM**

**HANDBOOK**

**2018-2019**

## **Courses**

Each student is required to take 12 graduate seminars in the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University and 6 additional courses at the 300- or 400-level. In addition, students without an M.A. in philosophy are required to take 6 elective graduate seminars P/NP in the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University during their third year. Students are not permitted to enroll in a course for which they serve as a TA.

## **Distribution Requirements**

Students must take at least one course in the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University, at the 300- or 400-level, in each of the following areas:

- Ancient Philosophy
- Modern Philosophy
- Contemporary Philosophy Category A: moral or political philosophy
- Contemporary Philosophy Category B: metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, or philosophy of science.

The Graduate Advisory Committee will consider granting exceptions, and will determine, in borderline cases, whether a course falls into one of the above categories. A course that covers topics from two categories can only be counted as satisfying one of the requirements. Elective courses taken at the 400-level to satisfy the distribution requirements count towards the 12 required graduate seminars in the Department of Philosophy. In normal cases, these requirements are to be completed before a student is admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D.

## **Logic Requirement**

The logic requirement for graduate students can be fulfilled in several ways.

(1) Standardly, students attend lectures for PHIL 250, and enroll with the instructor of the class in an independent study. Graduate students are expected to undertake additional work so that their coursework is at the 300- or 400- level.

Other possible ways to fulfill the logic requirement are listed below; however, whether or not coursework falling under the following rubrics does fulfill the requirement is at the discretion of the logic advisor.

(2) Coursework at another institution deemed equivalent to or exceeding that described in (1).

(3) Coursework at another institution deemed equivalent to part of that described in (1), plus completion of some portion of that described in (1).

(4) A 300- or 400-level class in formal logic taught at Northwestern University. However, no course used to fulfill the logic requirement may also be used to fulfill a part of the language requirement.

### **Skills Requirement**

All students must demonstrate competence in at least one secondary skill or area that pertains to their primary philosophical training. In many cases, a skill will be adequate preparation in a language other than English, or a passing grade in an advanced logic course (one beyond the 200-level). In other cases, it may be some work in another discipline (e.g., linguistics, cognitive science, mathematics, etc.), or a philosophical field complementary to their principal specialization.

By the end of the first year, students should declare to the DGS what his or her proposed competence (or competences) will be, and the DGS will arrange a course of study (or an equivalent) that will demonstrate the needed level of training. In normal cases, it is expected that the student will achieve this goal before being admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D.

#### Language Requirement:

In order to satisfy the skills requirement through preparation in a language other than English, the student must show basic competence in French, German, Greek, Latin or another language that is acceptable to the Department. This involves:

1. Taking the three-quarter sequence of language courses given by the French, German, or Classics Departments (or equivalent summer intensive courses), and passing tests given by the instructors and acceptable to this Department. (Certificates of equivalent level courses taken at other institutions may be acceptable as well).
2. Passing an advanced competence test in the same language. The latter is meant to evaluate a student's ability to work effectively in the language in question. To this end, the student will be given a philosophical text of no more than three-pages length and up to three hours to translate it. This translation exam will be administered by a committee of two Department faculty who will also have selected the text. It will be administered once in each academic year, usually at the start of the Fall Quarter. A student must have satisfied the basic competency requirement in a language before sitting for the advanced test. (In exceptional circumstances – e.g., the student is a native speaker of the language in question – a student may, by petition, be exempted from the basic competence requirement or also the advanced competence test.)

### **Proseminars**

All first- and second-year students are required to take two two-quarter courses taught by a tenured or tenure-track member of the Department of Philosophy, one during their first year

(Philosophy 401, Proseminar), the other during their second year (Philosophy 402, Proseminar). Philosophy 401 is limited to first-year students. Philosophy 402 is mandatory for second-year graduate students, but the first quarter is open as a regular graduate seminar to students in other years.

The topics of these courses will be of wide interest and are selected by the instructor in consultation with the Chair and the Graduate Advisory Committee

For all students in Philosophy 401 and second-year students in Philosophy 402, the major research assignment of the course will be a long paper (up to 8,000 words) submitted at the end of the second term; the topic for the paper will be chosen by the end of the first term. Other students taking Philosophy 402 will ordinarily be expected to submit a seminar-length paper at the end of the first term. During the second term, students will meet regularly with the instructor, either individually or collectively, and submit several drafts of their work. First drafts are normally due no later than the middle of the second term.

Proseminars may be used to satisfy the Department's distribution requirements, if the topic of the seminar falls within the scope of one of them. (When it is unclear whether a proseminar topic qualifies for one of the distribution requirements, the Graduate Advisory Committee will be asked to make this determination.) Proseminars cannot be used to satisfy a distribution requirement if the grade received is a C or lower.

### **Qualifying Papers**

In each of the first two years in the Ph.D. program, students will submit for evaluation one paper that was written that year for a seminar or proseminar at Northwestern. This paper will undergo double-blind evaluation by a committee of two faculty members chosen by the Director of Graduate Studies, where the committee will not include the faculty member who taught the seminar for which the paper was originally written.

The seminar papers must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies by June 1<sup>st</sup> and will be evaluated with a rubric that is created by the Department to ensure consistency among the faculty members' evaluations. The committee is confined to the grades of Pass or Fail. If the committee members disagree about the grades to be assigned and cannot resolve their disagreement, the Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Chair, will select another member of the Department to make the final determination.

In the Department's annual review, the quality of this paper will receive special attention as an important component of a student's overall record. Students who do not receive a passing grade may be asked to revise and improve the paper or to write a new and superior paper on a topic acceptable to the Department. Continuation in the program may depend on the quality of the revised paper. The Department may also require the student to take courses for a grade instead of pass/fail during the third year in order to improve his or her writing skills. Except in rare instances, students will be retained in the program at least until the second-year review.

All qualifying papers will receive written evaluations from the members of the committee who grade them. (These may take the form of comments written in the margins or at the end of the paper.) A passing grade for the second-year qualifying paper will count as satisfying TGS's Qualifying Exam requirement.

## **Marks**

In addition to assigning the normal grades to graduate students (A, B, etc.), instructors must assign to each graduate student in each class one of the following marks:

J: Superb work

K: Excellent work, with some minor deficiencies

L: Significant strengths clearly outweigh weaknesses or omissions

M: Satisfactory: a rough balance of strengths and weaknesses

N: Significant deficiencies clearly outweigh strengths

O: Far below graduate-level work

It is expected that most marks awarded in the Department will be L, M, or N. Students who receive a large number of marks of N or worse each year will receive special scrutiny. A student who receives no marks lower than M is making satisfactory progress with respect to coursework in the Ph.D. program.

These marks must be assigned for work done in both 300- and 400-level classes and will be accompanied by written evaluations (see below).

## **Written Evaluations**

In addition to a grade (A, B, etc.) and mark (J, K, etc.), students are entitled to a written evaluation of their course work from each instructor. These should be a paragraph of 100 words or more, and should identify both strengths and weaknesses in the student's work (if there are any). These evaluations will be given to students soon after the completion of their course work, and a copy will be placed in the student's file.

## **Taking Courses P/NP**

*Second-Year Students.* Students will be permitted to take one philosophy graduate seminar on a P/NP basis during their second year (see the Graduate School Bulletin for regulations regarding the P/NP option). In this course, a student will be assigned a P/NP grade on the basis of completing all required coursework except for any research paper that might otherwise be due.

Note: This arrangement may be entered into only with the prior agreement of the faculty member teaching the course (who may not agree), and the course may not be one that is being used to fulfill program requirements (i.e., the proseminars, the courses in Ancient, Modern, and

Contemporary philosophy, or the logic courses).

***Third-Year Students.*** All elective philosophy graduate seminars taken in the third year and the Dissertation Research Seminar will be taken P/NP. No major written work will be required of third-year students enrolled in these classes. At the beginning of each term, faculty should indicate to third-year students what they will be expected to do in order to receive a passing grade. Exception: to satisfy the logic or any of the distribution requirements, a course must receive a grade of B-minus or better and cannot be taken P/NP. To satisfy the 12 required graduate seminars in the Department of Philosophy, all courses must be taken for a grade except for the one P/NP permitted in the second year. Classes taken P/NP in the Classics Department during the third year can be at the 300- or 400-level, or may be lower level if they are language courses.

### **Incompletes**

Any requests for an incomplete must be submitted in writing, on a form provided by the Department, and must include an assurance that the incomplete requested does not exceed the limits specified in the paragraph below. The instructor may then approve or disapprove the request. If he or she approves the request, the student will then pass the request on to the Director of Graduate Studies for final approval or disapproval. No incomplete may be taken without the written approval of both the course instructor and the Director of Graduate Studies. The completed form will then remain a permanent part of the student's record. Except in unusual and unforeseen circumstances, requests for incompletes should not be put off to the very end of the term but should be anticipated and submitted in good time. In an emergency, if the Director of Graduate Studies is out of town, approval can be requested from the Chair.

No more than one incomplete will be permitted at any given time. In exceptional circumstances, a student may, with the prior permission of the course instructor, petition the Graduate Advisory Committee for an incomplete that would exceed that limit.

All incomplete papers must be submitted by **September 15th** of each year. If the deadline is not met, or the student does not receive a passing grade, there will be no TA support for the Winter Quarter.

### **Independent Studies**

First-year students are not allowed to take independent studies except in order to satisfy a logic or language requirement (that is, Philosophy 250 or 350) or to meet some extraordinary need. (Philosophy 250 figures in the logic requirement, 350 in the language requirement.) Second-year students are normally allowed to take one independent study, provided that they can demonstrate a need to do so; they are not normally allowed more than one. All requests to take independent studies during the first and second year, for reasons not having to do with the logic or language requirements, must be approved by the Graduate Advisory Committee. Petitions from first-year students must show why they should be allowed to take an independent study at all. Petitions

from second- year students must state that the material to be studied through the independent study is not available in any scheduled classes. Independent studies taken during the third year do not count toward the 6 elective graduate seminars that students must take on a P/NP basis.

### **Year-End Review**

The Department meets at the end of each academic year to review the progress of first- and second-year students and any other students in need of additional evaluation. The Director of Graduate Studies will meet with first- and second-year students to report the faculty's evaluation of their overall performance in the program.

*Third year students and above:* In consultation with the Graduate Program Assistant, dissertation advisers will check each spring to ensure that their advisees have met all department requirements and are making good progress on their dissertations. Any concerns should be reported to the DGS by June 1. The Department will discuss students who are not making good progress at the end of the academic year and propose remedies. In extreme cases, students may lose their funding if, after due warning, their progress does not improve.

### **Faculty Advisors**

All first- and second-year students will be assigned by the Director of Graduate Studies to a faculty advisor. The responsibilities of the advisor are (A) to offer advice about course selection in order to ensure that students can satisfy all course requirements by the end of their second year, (B) to contact students several times a year in order to discuss any academic problems they may be having, (C) to discuss with students any personal difficulties that are affecting their work, (D) to present the student's point of view at the annual meeting at which student progress is monitored, and (E) to advise the student regarding the writing of petitions and appeals addressed to the Department.

### **Colloquium Series & Other Events**

All graduate students are required to attend the Department's colloquium series regularly as well as other events organized by the Department as part of their professional training. Attendance and participation in those events is taken into consideration in the evaluation of the students' performance in the program at the annual review meeting in June.

### **Masters Degrees**

A Masters Degree in philosophy will be awarded to students who have: (A) completed two years of course work, (B) passed both qualifying papers, (C) received passing grades in courses that satisfy the Department's distribution requirements, (D) satisfied the Department's logic requirement, and (E) made up all incomplete grades. A student who has satisfied all of these

requirements except (B), having passed the first-year qualifying paper but not the second, may receive a Masters Degree upon successful revision of the qualifying paper or the writing of a new and superior paper (on a topic acceptable to the Department). Students must apply for a degree on [Caesar](#) upon completion of requirements.

### **Dissertation Prospectus and Oral Defense**

During their third year, students enroll in Philosophy 590 (Research) for one unit of credit during each of the three quarters. Students should use their work in 590 to find a dissertation topic and to prepare a dissertation prospectus (described below).

Third-year registration for 590 Research will be done with an advisor only after consulting with him or her and obtaining his or her signature on the registration form. Students may work with different advisors in different terms, and when the dissertation topic comes into sharper focus, they will go on to form their permanent dissertation committees.

Prospectus advisors will assist students with the preparation of a dissertation prospectus. Students are expected to pursue the following activities throughout the year: wide consultation with department faculty, and in particular regular consultation with potential members of the dissertation committee; a reading program structured towards achieving competence in the dissertation area; a presentation at the dissertation research seminar; discussion of a dissertation prospectus with faculty.

The dissertation prospectus should lay out the topic and plan for the dissertation work. It is not a philosophy paper, but rather a thesis plan that (a) articulates an interesting philosophical problem in a way that (b) displays the student's knowledge of the problem's place in the corresponding philosophical field as well as the leading attempts to resolve it and (c) gives as clear an indication as the student can give at this early stage of how he or she intends to organize the thesis, and of what he or she expects her contribution to be. The prospectus should give an overview of the chapters that are planned for the dissertation and the contents of each chapter. The length of the prospectus should be around 5000 words. In addition, it must contain a bibliography (normally at least 25 works). Students should work closely with their advisors in preparing the prospectus.

**In order to be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D., students must pass an oral defense of the dissertation prospectus by May 31 of the third year.** The oral defense will involve a discussion of the dissertation prospectus, and all three members of the dissertation committee need to be present. The oral defense should convince the dissertation committee that the student is ready to write a dissertation and that the thesis plan described in the prospectus is feasible. **If the Prospectus receives a conditional pass, the revised prospectus must be approved no later than October 15<sup>th</sup> of the fourth year.**

After passing the oral defense of the prospectus, students may choose to study abroad in consultation with their advisors. A petition to study abroad *before* passing the oral defense would be granted only if there are special circumstances. Petitions to study abroad before passing the

oral defense will be examined by the Graduate Advisory Committee. As part of his or her petition, the student must outline a research plan along the lines of the dissertation prospectus and the plan must be approved by the prospectus advisor.

### **Dissertation Research Seminar**

All third- and fourth-year graduate students are required to present a paper at the DRS. The DRS meets once during the Winter Quarter for every student in the third-year, and once during the Spring Quarter for every student in the fourth-year. All fifth-year students have the option of presenting a paper at the DRS during the quarter of their choice.

The format is colloquium-style, with a forty-five to fifty minute presentation of a paper on some specific topic related to the dissertation project (or prospective project, in the case of third-year students) and an hour of audience questions. During each quarter, the time and place of the DRS will remain constant. All third- and fourth-year students are expected to attend all DRS meetings for both classes, as are members of the student's dissertation committee (or prospective members, in the case of third-year students). Other students and faculty are also welcome.

Students should meet regularly with their advisors during the writing of their DRS papers.

### **Dissertation Length and Time to Defense**

The length of a dissertation is expected to be between 150 and 250 pages (40,000 – 80,000 words). Students must allow at least three weeks between the submission of the final draft of a dissertation and the oral defense. Exceptions in both cases require the approval of all members of the dissertation committee.

### **Dissertation Oral Defense**

All members of the Department – both faculty and graduate students – are welcome at and encouraged to attend the oral defenses of dissertations. Whenever possible, faculty and graduate students should receive notification of the time and place of dissertation defenses at least one week before they take place. Notification is the responsibility of the Chair of the dissertation committee. In addition, students should circulate an abstract of the dissertation (500-1000 words) to all faculty and other graduate students at least one week before their oral defense.

### **Supervision and Evaluation of Student Teaching**

#### **1. Teaching Requirements**

All international PhD and MFA students whose primary language is not English are required to fulfill TGS's spoken English proficiency requirement before being appointed as graduate or

teaching assistants.

## 2. Preparation of TAs

A. Students are strongly advised to visit a TA session at some point before they begin teaching. Normally this will be during their first year in the program, when they are not yet TAs. Students are also advised to avail themselves of the guidance of the Searle Center staff.

B. The DGS should organize a training session for new TAs. It will meet very close to the beginning of the academic year. Those who lead it should include one faculty member (selected by the DGS) and at least one advanced graduate student who has considerable experience as a teacher. Among the topics that might be discussed are these: grading, plagiarism, techniques for stimulating discussion, the division of labor among faculty and TAs, and alternative models for how to lead a discussion.

C. During their first quarter of teaching, students may request that they be paired with a more experienced TA, who will help with any problems that arise in the course.

## 3. Communication between faculty and TAs

A. It is recommended that faculty members meet with their TAs before the latter hold their first section, and offer guidance about what they are expected to accomplish in the classroom. A policy should be adopted about whether extensions of deadlines are permissible, who is to make these decisions, the resolution of grade disputes, and so on.

B. Faculty members are advised to give their TAs guidelines for grading exams and papers so as to insure uniformity and fairness. Faculty should also indicate their expectations regarding the way exam questions should be answered, and the criteria or models to be used in the assignment of grades to exams and papers.

## 4. TA Workload

The Department endorses a guideline that we should not expect more than 6000 words of formal writing per student per quarter. This guideline is expected to be in conformity with University regulations, and where they conflict, the University rules take priority. The instructor is encouraged to maintain open communication with the TAs, e.g., by soliciting their feedback on their workload.

## 5. Evaluation of TAs

A. Whenever a student serves as a TA for a course, the normal arrangement will be that the faculty member whom the student is assisting will visit the class, discuss the student's performance, and write a brief evaluation, which will be placed in the student's file. When appropriate, the student's class can instead be visited by some other faculty member.

B. When the student enters the job market, a faculty member will write a letter in which the

student's qualifications as a teacher are described. That letter will draw upon the evaluations that have been placed in the student's file, and will become part of the dossier that is sent to potential employers.

### **Non-Philosophy Students with a Concentration in Philosophy**

Students who declare Philosophy as their secondary department will be required to take 6 courses in the Department of Philosophy at the 300- or 400-level, of which at least three should be at the 400-level.

At the end of their third year, their performance in the program will be evaluated at the Department's annual graduate student review meeting. On the basis of the grades and written evaluations provided by the instructors of the classes in which the student has enrolled, the Department will determine whether the student's performance was satisfactory. In case of a negative evaluation, students may be asked to revise and improve one of the papers they submitted for the classes in which their performance was not entirely satisfactory or to write a new and superior paper on a topic acceptable to the Department. The paper will be evaluated by a two-person committee (anonymous to the students) on a Pass/Fail basis. If the student fails, the Department can recommend to the student's primary program or home department that the student be given a second chance to revise the paper, or can recommend that the student's relationship with the Department of Philosophy be terminated.

### **Degree Completion and Graduation**

TGS requires that PhD students complete all degree requirements before the end of the 9th year of study and master's students before the end of the 5th year of study. Please refer to TGS's Filing requirements and forms for graduation page:

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/policies/phd-degree-requirements.html#filling>

### **Financial Support**

Every student admitted into the program is guaranteed five years of full funding. Students in their first and fifth year receive fellowships and tuition scholarships. In intervening years, they are funded through appointments as teaching assistants. In addition, the Graduate School awards dissertation fellowships on a competitive basis with other departments.

For graduate conference travel, the department provides up to \$300 for domestic travel and up to \$500 for international travel assistance. Also, graduate students may apply for up to \$800 in funding through the Conference Travel Grant provided through The Graduate School. Please note that The Graduate School fully grants this award once per year to students who have completed 3 quarters of full-time, full-tuition registration (or grads not in their 1st year). The award is granted twice in a student's graduate career. See the Graduate Program Assistant or Department Assistant for more information. The instructions and application can be found at

[www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/fellowships-and-grants/internalgrants/conference-travel-grant/index.html](http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/fellowships-and-grants/internalgrants/conference-travel-grant/index.html).

For graduate conference travel, students must be on the conference program as either commentators, presenters or chairs. For students included in the American Philosophical Association Central Meeting program (either as commentators, presenters or chairs) the department can cover the registration costs (up to \$300) associated to attend. This funding will be considered as a domestic travel request awarded for the academic year.

To request conference travel funding, please send an email to the Chair and copy the Department Assistant Crystal Foster with conference name, date, location and the reason for attending. Once the Chair approves the request the Department Assistant will provide details to claim the reimbursement.

### **Student Support at the University**

There are many offices at Northwestern with resources and expertise to support you through various challenges. Some of these are listed below. Students who have questions about where to go with a particular concern can consult their advisor or the DGS. (All faculty are governed by mandated reporter laws and must share any information about discrimination or harassment with the Office of Equity.)

*Accessible NU:* Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU ([accessiblenu@northwestern.edu](mailto:accessiblenu@northwestern.edu); 847-467-5530). Their office will work with you and the faculty to determine reasonable accommodations. Accessible NU manages academic accommodations for both physical and mental health needs. <https://www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu/faculty/general-information/index.html>

*CAPS:* Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) serves as the primary mental health service at Northwestern University. Students can receive free short-term counseling and referrals to longer term providers. <https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/index.html>

*Student Advising and Support Services:* The SASS team assists students by coordinating campus and community resources to promote well-being when dealing with complex issues. SASS members are available to consult with students, faculty, staff, families and community members/providers to determine the best approach for a student's current situation. <https://www.northwestern.edu/studentaffairs/dos/about-us/our-office/assistance-support/>

### **Typical Ph.D. Program**

All incoming students, regardless of graduate work in philosophy done elsewhere, are required to fulfill the first two years of the Department's course requirements (18 course credits) in accordance with the schedule laid out in the bulletin.

In the third year, all students without an M.A. in philosophy are required to take 3 units each quarter in the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University: 1 unit of 590 (Research) and two graduate seminars. The two graduate seminars are taken on a Pass/No Pass basis (except for a course that satisfies the logic or any of the distribution requirements). In addition, they will participate in the Dissertation Research Seminar.

In the third year, all students with an M.A. in philosophy are required to take 3 units of 590 (Research) each quarter and the Dissertation Research Seminar. Below is the standard model for the first five years in the Ph.D. program:

	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Year I	3 Course Units	3 Course Units	3 Course Units
Year II	3 Course Units	3 Course Units	3 Course Units
Year III	590 (1 Unit) + 2 P/N Seminars	590 (1 Unit) + 2 P/N Seminars (Dissertation Research Seminar in Winter quarter)	590 (1 Unit) + 2 P/N Seminars

At this point, a student will have completed the Department's coursework, skills, and logic requirements and is expected to qualify.

Year IV	TGS 500 (Dissertation Research Seminar in Spring quarter)	TGS 500	TGS 500
Year V	TGS 500	TGS 500	TGS 500

After the fifth year, students who are still receiving funding from the University will register for TGS 500. Students in their sixth year and above who are not receiving funding from the University will register for TGS 512 each quarter until degree completion.

\*\* Northwestern University reserves the right to change without notice any statement in this publication concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, tuition, fees, curricula and courses.