

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT DEGREE PROGRAMS: M.A.

Adopted April 4, 1977; revised June, 1990; September, 2002

The University offers M.A. degrees under two plans: Plan A involves a thesis, Plan B substitutes additional course work and a Plan B project for the thesis. Students are urged to consult the Graduate School Bulletin for information on Graduate School procedures. The details of the department's requirements for these two types of master's degrees are specified below. The Director of Graduate Studies of the Philosophy Department is responsible for interpreting specific requirements explained in this document, for approving degree programs, and for approving the courses offered to fulfill the history of philosophy requirement.

I. Advising

After an initial conversation with the Director of Graduate Studies, each student in the M.A. program will be assigned to a member of the graduate faculty as an advisee. This faculty member will continue as adviser until the student's thesis or major adviser is appointed at the time of submission of the M.A. program. Students are encouraged to consult regularly with their advisers and to seek their aid at the times of deciding upon courses to take, when considering the content of their degree programs, during deliberation about papers to present for the Plan B project, while writing the thesis, and so on.

II. General Requirements: Plan A

(1) Course and Breadth Requirements:

The department requires its Plan A master's degree students to complete 14 course credits in philosophy, 6 course credits in a department or departments other than philosophy, and 10 thesis credits. The courses taken in philosophy should show that consideration has been paid to the diversity and variety of areas of philosophy as well as to the student's specialized interest. The department recommends that students consult with their advisers when preparing programs of study.

(2) History of Philosophy

The department expects proficiency of its master's degree students in the history of philosophy. It accepts completion of two courses, or six course credits, in the history of philosophy, with a B average, as displaying the relevant expertise. One of the courses must be in the area of ancient philosophy and one must be in the area of modern philosophy.

(3) Thesis

The title of the Plan A master's thesis must be included on the Degree Program Form which is submitted to the director of graduate studies during the student's second semester in residence. A thesis for an M.A. in philosophy should reflect aptitude for

working with philosophical questions and ability to complete competent and independent research.

(4) Final Oral Examination

After the three members of the final oral examination committee agree that a thesis is ready for defense, the degree student is examined orally on the thesis by members of the committee. A majority affirmative vote of the committee is required to pass. Though students for the M.A. degree may schedule final orals before completing all other requirements, the department expects the various degree requirements to be substantially completed by the time of scheduling the examination.

III. General Requirements: Plan B

(1) Course and Breadth Requirements

The department requires its Plan B master's degree students to complete 24 course credits in philosophy and 6 course credits in a department or departments other than philosophy. The breadth requirement for a Plan B master's degree is the same as for a Plan A (See above).

(2) History of Philosophy (same as Plan A)

(3) Plan B Project

The department requires Plan B master's students to write three papers, at least two of which must be on philosophical topics, to fulfill the requirement of the Plan B project. Papers may be, but they need not be, associated with course work. The titles of these papers must be included on the Degree Program Form which is filed with the Graduate School.

(4) Final Oral Examination

A three member final oral examination committee examines the degree student on the student's papers. A majority vote in the affirmative is required to pass. Though students may schedule final orals before completing all other requirements, the department expects the various degree requirements to be substantially completed by the time the final oral is scheduled.

IV. Degree Programs

During the second semester in residence, every master's degree student is required to submit a program of study for consideration to the Director of Graduate Studies. The Graduate School provides forms for this purpose. The program of study specifies the courses that will be offered to satisfy the credit and breadth requirements of the degree. When submitting the Master's

Degree Program Form to the Director of Graduate Studies, students should also submit (a) a statement explaining the method of satisfying the history requirement and (b) a list of names of those faculty whom the student wishes to serve as members of his or her final oral examination committee. The list mentioned under (b) should include the name of a faculty member of a department other than philosophy as well as the name of one's proposed thesis or major adviser. The Graduate School appoints oral examination committees upon the recommendation of the Director of Graduate Studies.

V. Evaluation of Student Progress

Faculty are required to provide students with information on how their performance in philosophy is viewed by writing evaluations of students' work in each course which they complete and submitting them to the main office. The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for providing faculty with forms for this purpose and for seeing to it that the evaluations get written and properly placed. Students' files are open to them to peruse at their leisure.

Toward the end of each semester, members of the department meet to evaluate the performances of students who have been in residence for two semesters. The work of each student is considered separately and, on the basis of records of course work and evaluations, the faculty decides whether to permit the student to continue in the M.A. degree program. Decisions of the faculty are communicated to students by letter immediately following the meeting.

VI. Language

The Department of Philosophy does not formally require demonstration of proficiency in a second language for the M.A. It is the department's judgment, nevertheless, that an ability to read at least one language in addition to English is an extremely useful accompaniment to a program of scholarly research in philosophy. There are also areas of philosophy in which other kinds of knowledge or skills will be useful or indispensable, e.g. methods of statistical analysis in some branches of social philosophy and techniques of manuscript or archival research in some areas of the history of philosophy. The department relies upon advisers to point out to their advisees the importance of a second language or other instrument of research in particular areas.

VII. Procedure of Transfer to the Ph.D. Program

Application for transfer from the M.A. to the Ph.D. program or for admission to the Ph.D. program after completion of an M.A. degree in the Department is made by filing a change of status request with the Graduate School. The application is reviewed by the Department's Admission and Aid Committee and a recommendation is made by the Committee to the Graduate School. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Committee recommend a transfer before completion of the M.A. Final Examination. In addition to filing a change of status request with the Graduate School, M.A. students applying to the Ph.D. program must submit a complete Ph.D. program application. This application should include at least two letters from members of the faculty recommending the transfer. Applications from students having completed the M.A. Final Examination should include an evaluation of the student's performance in the exam by at

least one member of the committee. Admission decisions will be based on the same standards employed by the Admissions and Aid Committee in judging applications for admission to the Ph.D. program from students outside the Department's M.A. program.