

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The following presents chronologically, and adds specificity to, the official statement of degree requirements, which is available here:

<https://grad.ucla.edu/programs/humanities/philosophy/>

OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTORATE

Preliminary Requirements: undergraduate work

We hope that students will enter our PhD program having completed an undergraduate course of study that included first-order logic and some breadth in the history of philosophy. The Logic Fluency Requirement and the History Distribution Requirement are designed to ensure either that this is so or that, if not, students will do work in these areas in their time as a graduate student.

The History Distribution Requirement can be satisfied by showing that you studied certain figures as an undergraduate (details below). Students who have not already studied these figures will be asked to include them in their coursework as a graduate student. The Logic Fluency Requirement is satisfied either by passing an exam or by earning a B in an undergraduate logic course (details below).

Coursework as a Graduate Student

Candidates for the Ph.D. will complete 16 courses, all but two of which must be graduate or upper-division courses in the Philosophy Department at UCLA (Philos 100–Philos 289). The remaining two courses may be courses in another department, but cannot be lower division Philosophy courses. Only courses in Groups I-IV satisfy the course requirements; “Special Studies” courses, including 500 series, the 290’s, and individual studies courses, do not. (See the “electives” section below for the conditions in which courses outside of UCLA Philosophy may count toward the 16 courses.)

Courses are to be chosen so as to satisfy the more specific course requirements detailed below. Two of the required 16 courses may be taken on an S/U basis as long as a total of 14 graduate or upper-division courses are taken for a letter grade within the Philosophy Department at UCLA and are passed with a grade of B or better, satisfying the specific requirements below. Only elective courses may be taken S/U (and at most two).

Passing the departmental Foreign Language Reading Exam in French, German, Latin, or Greek counts as having taken one of the 16 courses and reduces the total number of required courses to 15, 14 of which are required to be taken for a letter grade within the Philosophy Department and passed with a grade of B or better. (When relevant to a student’s doctoral research, another language may be substituted with the consent

of the department.)

Courses taken before entering the graduate program do not count toward satisfaction of course requirements (other than towards the history distribution requirement). (Students who have completed a substantial amount of graduate work elsewhere may petition the Graduate Advisor(s) for limited exceptions to this policy.)

Students are to enter their third year with only two *elective courses outstanding*. All non-elective course requirements are to be completed in the first two years. (In the third year, students will write the proposition, details of which appear in a later section.) All course requirements must be completed before taking one's pre-dissertation orals and advancing to candidacy.

Other Requirements: exams, research, teaching, and the dissertation

In addition to satisfying the course requirements, candidates for the Ph.D. take the Master's Competency Exam and pass the Logic Fluency Exam during their first year. In their third year they write the proposition. They must pass an oral examination on their Dissertation Proposal by the end of their fourth year. The last stage is completing the Dissertation. In addition, students must complete three quarters of a teaching practicum to earn the PhD (this is ordinarily done in the course of TA-ing).

Students are expected to enroll in 12 units each quarter while in residence, throughout their career at UCLA (i.e. until the time they graduate and leave the program, even after they have completed their course requirements). This is very important for the financing of our graduate program.

REQUIREMENTS TO BE MET DURING THE FIRST YEAR

During the first year students enroll in three courses each term and take either three or four exams, detailed below. Choose your courses with an eye to the following requirements:

The Logic Fluency Requirement

Students must either pass the Logic Fluency exam, which covers basic material (primarily derivations and symbolizations) in first order logic, or pass Philosophy 132 with a grade of "B" or better. Students who have passed Philosophy 132 or its equivalent before entering the graduate program are not exempted from this requirement. The Exam will be given before classes begin. The Department will finance a refresher session a few days before the Exam. It is required of all First Year students, except that students who have never taken a logic course may request to skip the Exam in favor of auditing 31 in fall or winter and taking 132 in spring.

Students who do not pass the Exam are required to enroll in or audit 132

in the spring. If auditing, the student must still do all the homework and take all the exams. They will be graded on the same basis as enrolled students. Sample exam questions to practice on are provided. If taken, Philosophy 132 counts towards the course requirements as an elective. If the student chooses to take the course S/U, an S will be awarded for work that would earn a B or better. *Note: taking Philosophy 132 requires doing homework and taking exams via the same computer application used in Philosophy 31. Talk to the instructor of those courses for further information, and consider familiarizing yourself with the application in advance of taking 132*

Students who have not satisfied the Requirement in their first year may take the Exam again in their second year, and if they do not pass, they must enroll in or audit 132 in the spring of their second year.

History Distribution Requirement

Students must take or have taken *for a grade* graduate or undergraduate courses that devote substantial attention to each of the following: Plato, Aristotle, an important medieval philosopher, Descartes, a British empiricist, and Kant.

Students may complete this requirement by petitioning the Graduate Advisor(s) for credit for courses taken previous to entering the program, and/or by taking undergraduate or graduate courses that cover the relevant material, and/or by taking (all or part of) Philosophy 100A–C, (Philosophy 100A satisfies the requirement for Plato and Aristotle; 100B satisfies the requirement for an important medieval philosopher and Descartes; 100C satisfies the requirement for a British empiricist and Kant.)

To aid in selecting courses during the first year, **students should file their petitions for credit for prior work (the “History Distribution Petition”) with the Graduate Advisor(s) during the first three weeks of their first year.** The History Distribution Petition is available at <https://philosophy.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/HistoryDistributionPetition.pdf>.

First Year Seminar

During the first year, Ph.D. candidates will complete, with a B grade or higher, the three courses constituting the Seminar for First-Year Graduate Students (200A, 200B, and 200C). This series of seminars provides an overview of philosophy through the 20th century.

Master's Comprehensive Examination, in three parts

During the first year, each student will take, in three parts, the Master's Comprehensive Examination (or MAC Exam).

The MAC Exam is based on material covered in the Seminar for First-Year

Graduate Students (200A–C). It is given in three parts, each part covering one quarter of the Seminar and typically administered by the instructor for that quarter no later than the first week of the next quarter. (The instructor for 200C typically administers the MAC Exam for 200C during the last week of Spring quarter.)

The examination is passed or failed as a whole, which does not necessarily require passing of all three parts. Passage of the MAC exam is a necessary condition for being awarded the MA degree. The Department does not require any written examination to be passed by students as a condition of advancing to candidacy. It does, however, require each student to take the Master's Comprehensive Examination, which the Department may use for diagnostic purposes.

The Logic Course Requirement

In addition to satisfying the Logic Fluency Requirement (see above), students must also complete one upper-division (or higher) course in advanced logic (e.g. Philosophy 135, 136), or similar technical subject including probability and inductive logic (Philosophy 133B). This course is normally to be taken in the philosophy department, but may be taken elsewhere at the discretion of the Graduate Advisor(s).

The History Graduate Course Requirement (2 courses)

Students must complete two graduate courses on pre-Twentieth Century figures (Philos 201–220 or 245), one of which is not concurrent with an undergraduate course. At least one of these two courses is to be completed during the first year. Note that *only* philosophers whose primary work was completed before the Twentieth Century are counted as historical figures for the purposes of the History Graduate Course Requirement. Note, too, that if 245 is used to satisfy the History requirement, that same course cannot be used to satisfy the Ethics or the Special Area requirement (no course may be double-counted).

REQUIREMENTS TO BE MET DURING THE FIRST OR THE SECOND YEAR

The Ethics Graduate Course Requirement

Students must complete one four-unit graduate course in ethics or value theory (Philos 240–259).

The Metaphysics and Epistemology Graduate Course Requirement

Students must complete one four-unit graduate course in metaphysics or epistemology (Philos 270–289, 232, 234, 235 and often, by petition, other philosophy of science courses).

The Special Area Requirement


Students who write a proposition (see below) on a topic in metaphysics or epistemology (including work in the history of philosophy about such topics) must take one *additional* graduate seminar in ethics and value

theory, choosing from among Philosophy 241, 245, 246, 247, and 248. Students who write a proposition on a topic in ethics or value theory (including work in the history of philosophy about such topics) must take one *additional* graduate seminar in metaphysics or epistemology, choosing from among Philosophy 232, 275, 281, 282, 283, 286 and 287.

Electives and Tools Requirement

Students are to take enough electives (typically five) to make a total of 14 upper-division and graduate level courses in philosophy (not including individual studies courses) at UCLA. These five electives must be taken for a letter grade. (Courses taken to fulfill the specific requirements described above count toward this total. Only courses in Groups I-IV satisfy the requirement; “Special Studies” courses, including 500 series, the 290’s, and individual studies courses, do not.)

In addition, students are to complete two additional elective courses, sometimes called the “Tools Requirement” because they are intended to play a supporting role in your research. These courses may be taken on an S/U basis and may, with the approval of the Graduate Advisor(s), be taken outside of the UCLA Philosophy Department (i.e. in another department at UCLA or in the Philosophy Department of some other institution). Students should consult with faculty members within their area of interest as to the appropriateness of courses outside of the department. One of these additional electives may be waived by passing the Department’s Foreign Language Reading Exam in French, German, Latin, or Greek. When relevant to a student’s doctoral research, another language may be substituted with the consent of the department.

It should also be mentioned here that it is sometimes possible to have a course satisfy one requirement and to have a second course *with the same course number* satisfy another distinct requirement. To see whether this is possible, simply look up the description of the course [on the registrar’s website](#) and see if it includes the language “May be repeated for credit with consent of instructor.” In addition to obtaining the consent of the instructor, one should also obviously ensure that the content/topic of the course is different between the two instances of the course. If there are any questions on this, consult the SAO or the Graduate Advisor(s). 

Upon completing the requirements for the M.A. (see below) students are encouraged to file for that degree.

REQUIREMENTS TO BE MET DURING THE SECOND YEAR

Teaching Requirement

Students will begin their teaching practicum during their second year. Ph.D. candidates must complete three quarters of Philosophy 375: Teaching Apprentice Practicum to earn their degree (this is normally done in the course of TA-ing).

REQUIREMENTS TO BE MET DURING THE THIRD YEAR

Proposition Requirement

Before beginning dissertation work (and before taking the qualifying oral examinations and advancing to candidacy), students spend most of an academic year writing and revising an extended paper – the Proposition – of between 7500 and 9000 words (25-30 pages) that treats some specific philosophical problem. The Proposition must be completed before a student can advance to candidacy. For more detailed timeline and instruction, please consult the later section, “The Proposition.”

Immediately after the Proposition is completed, a student must choose an interim advisor to guide them through the initial stages of advancing to candidacy. (Please see the section “Advancing to Candidacy” below for details.)

Doctoral Oral Qualifying Examination

After completing the course requirements and the proposition, students sign up for independent research with a faculty member (or faculty members) to develop a project for a dissertation. The student assembles a proposal—a substantial piece of work that outlines the project and some of its central questions and ideas. When the student’s primary faculty advisor on the project feels the proposal is sufficiently developed, the student forms a committee (in consultation with his or her primary faculty advisor) and schedules an oral qualifying examination. All other requirements *must* be completed before the oral examination may be taken. Students must pass this exam to advance to candidacy for the Ph.D. Students can take their qualifying exam and advance to candidacy as early as the Spring of their third year. Students must advance to candidacy by **the end of the Spring quarter of their fourth year**. (For administrative details about this process, see the later section “Advancing to Candidacy”.)

Upon advancing, students earn another degree: the C.Phil., or “Candidate in Philosophy.”

REQUIREMENTS TO BE MET BETWEEN THE FOURTH YEAR AND THE SIXTH YEAR

Dissertation

Under the direction of the doctoral committee, students complete a dissertation that represents an original contribution in a chosen field. This dissertation should be completed and filed no later than the end of the seventh year.

Final Oral Examination

At the Oral Qualifying Examination, a student’s doctoral committee will decide whether the student will be required to take a Final Oral Examination upon completion of the dissertation.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE

For the M.A. degree, students must pass with a grade of B or better a total of nine upper division or graduate courses, including the First Year Seminar and a course satisfying the Logic Course Requirement (e.g. Philosophy 133B, 135, 136). At least five of the nine must be graduate courses. They must also pass the MAC exam. Students are encouraged to apply for the M.A. degree as soon as they have satisfied the relevant requirements.

Students that enter our PhD program with an M.A. in Philosophy from another school would need to petition the Graduate Division to be eligible to receive an M.A. degree here. These petitions are rarely granted. (See: Standards and Procedures for Graduate Study, pg. 6.)