

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**GRADUATE PROGRAM**  
**HANDBOOK**  
**2025-26**

Updated September 2025

## Philosophy PhD Program Regulations

**\* For requirements specific to the PhD in Ancient Philosophy, please see the section at the end of this document**

### **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 the first two years. One of these courses may be taken on a P/NP (pass/no pass) basis in the second year; all others must be taken on a graded basis. In addition, students who enter the program without an M.A. in philosophy are required to take 4 elective graduate seminars on a P/NP (Pass/No Pass) basis in the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University during their third year. Students who enter the department with an M.A. and students who pursue the Northwestern JD/PhD program are required to take 2 such seminars on a P/NP basis in their third year. The DGS may waive third-year coursework requirements in unusual circumstances in which a student enters the program with background in philosophy exceeding an M.A.

Students are also required to take Philosophy 488: Professional Skills (offered solely on a pass/no credit basis) in the spring quarter before the fall when they plan to apply for positions. The DGS may waive this requirement for students who decide not to pursue an academic career.

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 PhD.

### **Logic Requirement**

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

***For students who began the graduate program in September 2022 or earlier:***

(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.

***For incoming students in the graduate program, beginning in the 2023-24 academic year:***

- (1) Standardly, students attend lectures for PHIL 150 and PHIL 250 and enroll with the instructors of the class in an independent study (PHIL 399). Graduate students are expected to undertake additional work so that their coursework is at the 300 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) Achievement on a departmental logic placement exam or coursework at another institution deemed equivalent to or exceeding that described in (1).
- (3) Achievement on a departmental logic placement exam or 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 skills requirement.

**Procedure:**

- Students may opt simply to take both PHIL 150 and PHIL 250. This is what is expected of students with no logic background.
- Students may opt to take the logic placement exam, which will determine whether the student has fulfilled the logic requirement, or if the student must take PHIL 250 or both 150 and 250.
- Students who do neither of the preceding must consult with the logic advisor regarding previous logic coursework. After reviewing syllabi and course materials the logic advisor determines one of the following:
  - 1) The student must take both PHIL 150 and PHIL 250 to fulfill the requirement
  - 2) The student must take PHIL 250 to fulfill the requirement
  - 3) The student has fulfilled the requirement

Students falling under (a) and (b) above may still opt to take the placement exam. The student's placement will be that according to the exam if said placement is more advanced than that indicated by the advisor's assessment of coursework.

**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 their 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 PhD.

### **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 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.

Letter grades (A, B, etc.) and marks (J, K, etc.) for the proseminar sequence are the sole responsibility of the instructor, and are based on the paper, class participation, and any other factors that are normally relevant to the evaluation of students. However, the proseminar paper itself is evaluated by a two-person committee as described below.

### **Qualifying Dossiers**

Every student in the first and second years of the program will submit a dossier that includes 1) a paper of their choosing and 2) the proseminar paper written that year. The proseminar paper submitted for the dossier will be submitted at the end of the second quarter of the proseminar at the deadline set by the proseminar instructor. The paper chosen by the student must be a paper submitted for a class taken toward degree requirements and written within the last year (for second year students, this includes spring quarter of their first year). It should be about 5,000 to 10,000 words in length, but papers written and submitted for philosophy seminars may fall outside this range. The version submitted for the dossier must be the same as the version turned in for the class. The department encourages students, especially those in the second year, to select a paper in their intended area of dissertation study, broadly construed.

Each of the qualifying papers from the first category will undergo double-blind evaluation by a committee of two faculty members chosen by the DGS. This committee will not include the faculty member who taught the course for which the paper was originally written.

All proseminar papers will undergo double-blind evaluation by a committee of two faculty members chosen by the DGS. This committee will not include the faculty member who taught the proseminar.

Each committee is confined to the grades of Pass, Fail, or Requires Department Review. The committee must assign a single grade. If the committee members disagree about the grades to be assigned to a paper, they will consult and attempt to resolve their disagreement. If they cannot resolve their disagreement, the Director of Graduate Studies will select another member of the Department to make the final determination.

In cases in which the student receives a grade of Pass or a grade of Fail on both of these papers, this grade will also be the grade for the dossier. In cases in which grades on the two papers do not match, or in which at least one of the papers receives a grade of Requires Department Review, the department will determine a grade for the dossier in the annual review meeting.

All papers submitted 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.)

In the student's year-end review, the quality of the dossier will receive special attention as an important component of a student's overall record. A passing grade on the second-year dossier 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: well exceeds expectations for graduate-level work
- K: Excellent: only minor deficiencies
- L: Good: significant strengths clearly outweigh weaknesses or omissions
- M: Satisfactory: a rough balance of strengths and weaknesses
- N: Unsatisfactory: significant deficiencies outweigh strengths
- O: Poor: deep deficiencies and minimal strengths

It is expected that most marks awarded in the Department will be K, L, or M. Courses in which a student receives a mark of N or O cannot be used to satisfy core program requirements. Students who receive marks lower than M, or very few marks higher than M will receive special scrutiny.

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. Faculty may choose to write evaluations for students enrolled P/NP but are not required to do so.

### **Taking Courses P/NP**

Students are permitted to count one class taken on a P/NP (Pass/No Pass) basis during their second year towards their required coursework (i.e., one of the 18 courses to be taken in the first two years). This course may not fulfill the following requirements: the proseminars, the core courses in Ancient, Modern, and Contemporary philosophy, or the logic courses. *Students must secure agreement from the faculty member teaching the course and must be sure to register for P/NP status when signing up for the course on CAESAR.*

All elective philosophy graduate seminars taken in the third year and the Dissertation Research Seminar will be taken P/NP.

In philosophy courses, a student will be assigned a P grade if they do the assigned readings, participate in class discussion, and complete assigned shorter written work or presentation. Professors may assign a maximum of 3000 words (total) of informal original written work (with no single written assignment longer than 1000 words), such as weekly responses or preparation for a short oral presentation.

### **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 approved, 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. The prospectus defense cannot be scheduled until all required coursework (apart from 3<sup>rd</sup> year P/NP seminars) is completed.

### **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.

Students who do not receive a passing grade on their dossier may be asked to revise and improve one of the papers 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 their writing skills. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, a failing grade on the dossier, unsatisfactory performance in coursework, failure to fulfill teaching responsibilities, or conduct that violates university policy. Except in rare instances, students will be retained in the program at least until the second-year review.

*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 that will be communicated to the student in writing. Students may be dismissed from the program if 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.

### **Master's Degree**

A Master's Degree in philosophy will be awarded to students who have: (A) completed two years of course work, (B) passed both qualifying dossiers, (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. Upon completion of requirements students may apply for a degree by submitting the Master's Degree Completion form via TGS Forms in [GSTS](#) and receive program approval of the form by the date specified in the [Academic Calendar](#).

### **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 students should enroll for 590 Research only after consulting with the faculty member with whom they intend to enroll and obtaining their approval. 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. Dissertation committees must have a minimum of three members. The chair of the committee and at least one additional member must be graduate faculty in the Department of Philosophy.

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 they intend to organize the thesis, and of what they expect their 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 5,000 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 PhD, students must pass an oral defense of the dissertation prospectus. (Note that The Graduate School regards a student as admitted to candidacy after they pass their qualifying exam [second year departmental review]. This milestone is necessary, but not sufficient, to be regarded as admitted to candidacy within the department.) 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. This requirement should be met by May 31 of the third year. 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 their 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 Dissertation Research Seminar (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 and are 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 (500-1,000 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 to ensure 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 6,000 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.

### **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/academic-policies-procedures/policies/phd-degree-requirements.html>

### **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. Further details about TGS funding and other fellowships and grants can be found on the TGS website: <https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/index.html>  
<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/fellowships-and-grants/index.html>

The availability of funding for graduate student travel related to conference participation and summer school program attendance is determined on a year-by-year basis, according to budgetary considerations. For graduate conference travel, the department may be able to provide 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 graduates not in their 1st year). The award is granted twice in a student's graduate career. The instructions and application can be found on the TGS Funding page: <https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/fellowships-and-grants/internal-fellowships-grants/conference-travel-grant.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 may be able to 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 complete the Travel Funding Request Form online: <https://philosophy.northwestern.edu/graduate/program-overview/travel-funding-support.html> Once the Chair approves the request the Business Coordinator will provide details to claim the reimbursement. See the Graduate Program Assistant or Business Coordinator for more information.

### **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 via their [online application](#). 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. (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530)

<https://www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu/students/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. (847-491-2151) <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. (847-491-8430)

<https://www.northwestern.edu/studentaffairs/dos/about-us/our-office/assistance-support/>

## Typical PhD 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). Students will enroll in 3 course units in fall, winter, and spring quarters for the first two years. First and second year students register for TGS 500 each summer.

In the third year, students who entered the program without an M.A. in philosophy are required to take 4 elective graduate seminars in the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University. Those who enter with an M.A. are required to take 2 such seminars. These electives will be taken on a Pass/No Pass (P/NP) basis (except for a course that satisfies the logic or any of the distribution requirements). When not enrolled in a P/NP elective seminar, third year students will enroll in up to 3 units of PHIL 590 in fall, winter, and/or spring, and TGS 500 in summer. In addition, third year students will participate in the Dissertation Research Seminar (DRS).

By the fourth year, students will have completed the Department's coursework, skills, and logic requirements and are expected to qualify.

In the fourth year, students will register for 3 units of TGS 500 each quarter (fall, winter, spring, summer). In addition, fourth year students will participate in the Dissertation Research Seminar (DRS).

In the fifth year, students will register for 3 units of TGS 500 each quarter (fall, winter, spring, summer).

After the fifth year, students who are still receiving funding from the University will register for 3 units of TGS 500 for each quarter of funding. 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.

Below is the standard model for the first five years in the PhD program:

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Year I	3 Course Units	3 Course Units	3 Course Units	TGS 500
Year II	3 Course Units	3 Course Units	3 Course Units	TGS 500
Year III	PHIL 590 or P/NP	PHIL 590 or P/NP	PHIL 590 or P/NP	TGS 500

<i>admitted with an M.A. or in JD/PhD program</i>	seminar	seminar	seminar	
	Must take 2 elective graduate seminars P/NP (in fall, winter, or spring).			
	Dissertation Research Seminar in Winter quarter.			
<b>Year III</b> <i>admitted without an M.A.</i>	PHIL 590 or P/NP seminar	PHIL 590 or P/NP seminar	PHIL 590 or P/NP seminar	TGS 500
	Must take 4 elective graduate seminars P/NP (in fall, winter, or spring).			
	Dissertation Research Seminar in Winter quarter.			
<b>Years IV</b>	TGS 500	TGS 500	TGS 500	TGS 500
	Dissertation Research Seminar in Spring quarter.			
<b>Year V</b>	TGS 500	TGS 500	TGS 500	TGS 500

## **PhD in Ancient Philosophy**

This program, established in January 2011, is designed for students enrolled in the PhD program in the Philosophy Department who also wish to work closely with Northwestern's Classics Department. Upon completion of their requirements, they receive both a PhD from the Philosophy Department and a Certificate from the Classics Cluster (described below). The program provides students with the opportunity to work on their knowledge of ancient languages and to improve their understanding of the Greco-Roman world. One need not be part of the program to write a dissertation on ancient philosophy.

Students who choose to enter the program will be affiliated with the Classics Cluster, which makes the Department of Classics their official second home at Northwestern. Upon completion of the Program in Ancient Philosophy, they will receive a Certificate from the Classics Cluster, which will be indicated on their transcript. In most ways, students in the program are treated in the same way as other graduate students in the Philosophy Department. The requirements of the Philosophy Department are slightly modified to help prepare students for professional research in this field.

### **Skills Requirement**

The skills requirement must be met by showing competence in Greek or Latin, as appropriate for the authors the student wishes to work on. One must have at least three years' worth of language study or the equivalent.

If a student is admitted to the program without knowledge of Greek, they should take an intensive course the summer before arriving. (This can be done for free at the University of Chicago). Students entering the program with only one year of Greek must take second-year Greek (Greek 201-1,2,3) in their first year. Alternatively, students may be able to move directly to 300-level courses after taking Greek 201-1.

### **Proseminars and Distribution Requirements**

These are the same as those that apply to all Philosophy PhD students:

#### **Proseminars:**

- PHIL 401-1,2: Proseminar (first year): 2
- PHIL 402-1,2: Proseminar (second year): 2

#### **Distribution Requirement:**

Students must take at least one Philosophy Department course, 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

### **Logic Requirement**

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

***For students who began the graduate program in September 2022 or earlier:***

(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.

***For incoming students in the graduate program, beginning in the 2023-24 academic year:***

(1) Standardly, students attend lectures for PHIL 150 and PHIL 250 and enroll with the instructors of the class in an independent study (PHIL 399). Graduate students are expected to undertake additional work so that their coursework is at the 300 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) Achievement on a departmental logic placement exam or coursework at another institution deemed equivalent to or exceeding that described in (1).

(3) Achievement on a departmental logic placement exam or 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 skills requirement.

**Procedure:**

- Students may opt simply to take both PHIL 150 and PHIL 250. This is what is expected of students with no logic background.
- Students may opt to take the logic placement exam, which will determine whether the student has fulfilled the logic requirement, or if the student must take PHIL 250 or both 150 and 250.
- Students who do neither of the preceding must consult with the logic advisor regarding previous logic coursework. After reviewing syllabi and course materials the logic advisor determines one of the following:
  - 1) The student must take both PHIL 150 and PHIL 250 to fulfill the requirement
  - 2) The student must take PHIL 250 to fulfill the requirement
  - 3) The student has fulfilled the requirement

Students falling under (a) and (b) above may still opt to take the placement exam. The student's placement will be that according to the exam if said placement is more advanced than that indicated by the advisor's

assessment of coursework.

### **Philosophical Greek Courses**

Each year, the Classics Department will offer one designated course in which students read a philosophical text in Greek. Students in both their first and second years must enroll in this course for credit. Students in their third year must take the course P/NP. Students in higher years are encouraged to enroll. Students who enter the program with only one year of Greek can either take this course in their first year (if they feel ready) or take it for credit in their second and third years.

### **Electives**

- Philosophy courses at the 400-level: 10 (two fewer than those that apply to other Philosophy PhD students)
- Greek or Latin courses at the 300-level or above (including philosophical Greek): 4.
- Classes taken P/NP in the Classics Department during the third year can be at the 400- or 300-level or may be lower level if they are language courses.
- Additional courses: 4 (two fewer than those that apply to other Philosophy PhD students)

Students enrolled in the PhD Program in Ancient Philosophy do not take as many 400-level Philosophy courses (ten instead of twelve) and have fewer additional courses (four instead of six); and they take the two philosophical Greek courses as well as two other Greek or Latin courses. If a student in this program needs to take language courses below the 300-level, these can either be among the four “additional courses” mentioned above or be taken as an overload.

### **Other PhD Degree Requirements**

- Examinations: oral qualifying examination to determine competence within chosen field of proposed dissertation
- Research/Projects: two research papers related to the Proseminars
- PhD Dissertation: department approval of dissertation topic by three-member dissertation committee with oral qualifying examination as above
- Final Evaluations: oral defense of dissertation
- Other: annual review by faculty

### **Other Regulations**

The regulations governing the Ancient Philosophy PhD program are the same as those that apply to all students enrolled in the Philosophy PhD program, with the following exceptions:

- Third year students in the Ancient Program may take up to half of their required P/NP seminars in the Classics department rather than in the Philosophy Department.
- Students in the Ancient Philosophy Program are expected to attend the Ancient Philosophy Workshop and either the Greek or the Latin reading group. Students are always welcome at either reading group, but they are not required to attend if they are enrolled in a Greek or Latin course. Students are also expected to attend the Philosophy Department’s colloquium series, as are all students enrolled in the Philosophy Department’s graduate program.

*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.*

## **JD/PhD program**

Students admitted to the Northwestern JD/PhD program will receive both a PhD from the Philosophy Department and a JD from the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. In most ways, students in the program are treated in the same way as other graduate students in the Philosophy Department. The requirements of the Philosophy Department are modified, however, to allow time for completion of the JD coursework, to incorporate the expertise gained through that study into the PhD program, and to add one additional requirement. Namely, students must attend a three-day “orientation to law” program during Winter Break in the first year of their PhD program. Students will be assigned advisors in the philosophy department and in the law school, who will both be available to advise the student during the first four years of the program.

### **Standard timeline:**

Years 1 and 2: coursework in the PhD program, fulfilling the philosophy PhD course requirements (as outlined above)

- In year 1, attendance of a three-day law school orientation workshop during winter break
- In year 2, Teaching assistantship in the philosophy department
- In year 2, discussion of one philosophy seminar paper with the assigned advisor in the law school, as a first step towards generating research ideas that integrate philosophy with law

Years 3 and 4: coursework at the law school (which will be understood to fulfill the philosophy PhD “skills requirement,” provided that the dissertation substantially engages with related topics)

Year 5: return to the PhD program, including:

- completion of 2 philosophy courses at the 400 level, taken P/NP;
- completion and presentation of the DRS (Directed Research Seminar) paper, advised by one professor in the philosophy department and with required consultation with one law professor;
- completion and oral defense of the dissertation prospectus; it is expected that the student’s dissertation committee will include at least one professor from the Northwestern philosophy department, and at least one law professor

Years 6 and 7: completion and oral defense of dissertation

- During years 5-7, students will be teaching assistants for two of the three years

At the end of a student’s second year of law school (year 4 in the program), the student will decide whether to remain at the Law School for a third year or return to their PhD department. If the student opts to return to their department, the current degree progression requirements remain unchanged. If the student opts to spend a third year in law school, the student will be able to graduate with their JD at the end of the third year of law school, assuming all Law School graduation requirements are met. In that case, the student will need to work together with the philosophy department, to identify research done in the law school that could build towards completing the first DRS project (normally done in the third year of the PhD program), and to ensure that the dissertation prospectus can be completed before the beginning of the sixth year. The student will not need to apply the dissertation toward meeting JD credit requirements.

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

Northwestern University prohibits discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, creed, national origin, ethnicity, caste, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, height, weight, or any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under federal, state, or local law, regulation, or ordinance or any other classification protected by law in the matters of admissions, employment, housing or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended in 2008; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; and any other federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or ordinances that prohibit discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation.

The University has designated the Associate Vice President for Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance to coordinate the University's compliance with federal and state civil rights laws regarding protected characteristics, including Title IX and those other laws and regulations references above:

Emily Babb

Associate Vice President for Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance | Title IX Coordinator  
Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance  
1800 Sherman Ave., Suite 4500  
Evanston, IL 60201  
(847) 467-6165  
[OCR@northwestern.edu](mailto:OCR@northwestern.edu)

Tiffany Little

Senior Director. Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance | Deputy Title IX Coordinator  
Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance  
1800 Sherman Ave., Suite 4500  
Evanston, IL 60201  
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The University complies with all federal and state laws that protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination based on their disability or perceived disability status. As such, reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities when such modifications and services are necessary to access the institution's programs and services. The University's ADA/504 Coordinator is:

Laura Conway

Director, ADA Compliance | ADA Coordinator  
Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance  
1800 Sherman Ave., Suite 4500  
Evanston, IL 60201  
(847) 467-6165  
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Inquiries about Title IX or the University's prohibitions against discrimination, harassment, and retaliation can be directed to the Associate Vice President for Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance, the ADA/504 Coordinator (for disability-related questions) or to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights at the contact information listed below:

Complaints and inquiries regarding discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving federal laws may be directed to:

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
John C. Kluczynski Federal Building  
230 S. Dearborn St., 37th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312) 730-1560  
[OCR.Chicago@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Chicago@ed.gov)

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
John C. Kluczynski Federal Building  
230 S. Dearborn St., Suite 1866  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312) 872-9777

Any person who believes that the University as a federal contractor has violated nondiscrimination or equal opportunity obligations may contact the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) at

OFCCP  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20210  
[www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)  
(800) 397-6251