

Graduate Student Handbook
Department of Philosophy
Texas A&M University
Seventh edition – Fall 2010

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Texas A&M University

Welcome to graduate studies in philosophy at Texas A&M University!

This handbook is intended to provide you with an overview of our M.A. and Ph.D. programs, some guidance on what you will need to do and when in order to graduate with a minimum of hassle, and some information that our graduate students generally find helpful.

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Please send corrections, typo-sightings, and suggestions for things to include in future editions to Robin Smith: rasmith@tamu.edu.

§I - GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Every department with a graduate program has a Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) with primary responsibility for administering graduate programs in that department. Our department also has an Associate Director of Graduate Studies who serves as advisor to students in the M.A. program. Generally, questions about the Ph.D. program should be directed to the DGS and questions about the M.A. program to the Associate DGS. The Graduate Program Advisory Council (GPAC) ranks applicants for admission and generally advises the DGS. Finally, every department on campus elects a graduate student representative to the Graduate Student Council (GSC), which represents the interests of graduate students to the University administration, faculty, and the Student Government Association. We also have a graduate student as a voting member of the department GPAC, but he is excused when the Council ranks applicants for admission and discusses individual graduate students.

The following people are filling the above positions for 2010-2011:

Robin Smith, Director of Graduate Studies / Ph.D. program advisor
214A Bolton Hall, 845-5679, rasmith@tamu.edu

Clare Palmer, Associate Director of Graduate Studies / M.A. program advisor
302C Bolton Hall, 862-1435, cpalmer@philosophy.tamu.edu

Charles Carlson, student member of department GPAC
309G Bolton Hall, 458-8881, c-carlson@philosophy.tamu.edu

In addition to Carlson, Palmer, and Smith, professors Robert Garcia, Hugh J. McCann, and Gregory Pappas have been appointed to the GPAC for the 2010-2011 academic year.

The department's representative to the Graduate Student Council is:
Mason Cole, 305D Bolton Hall, 862-6975, m-cole@philosophy.tamu.edu

§II - GRADUATE COURSES

PHIL 611, Ancient Philosophy – Greek and Roman philosophy from 600 BCE to 300 CE; emphasis on Plato and Aristotle. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 614, Medieval Philosophy – Christian, Jewish and Islamic thought from 300 to 1450 CE; emphasis on Augustine and Aquinas. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 616, Modern Philosophy – Developments in philosophy from the Renaissance through the Enlightenment: Renaissance humanism and natural science, 17th and 18th century empiricism and rationalism, idealism; major thinkers including Descartes, Hume, Kant, Hegel. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 620, Contemporary Philosophy – 19th and 20th century philosophical movements: phenomenology, existentialism, positivism, pragmatism, analysis, process thought. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 623, American Philosophy – The genesis of American philosophical thought from the seventeenth century until the work of Emerson; subsequent concentration on the philosophies of Pierce, James, Royce, Dewey, Mead, Santayana and Whitehead. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 630, Aesthetics – Metaphor, the ontology of artworks, art and artifactuality, aesthetic attitudes, concepts of aesthetic appraisal such as beauty and sublimity and theory of tropes. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 631, Philosophy of Religion – Investigation of metaphysical and epistemological issues concerning religious claims, beliefs, and experiences. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 632, Social and Political Philosophy – Theories of justice, equality, liberty and authority in social and political institutions; individualism and the social contract; political philosophy of writers such as Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Dewey and Rawls. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 633, Philosophy of Law – Key issues in normative and analytical jurisprudence, including the concept of law; the relationship between law and morality; civil disobedience; the moral obligation to obey the law; punishment. Prerequisite: Approval of Instructor.

PHIL 635, Ethical Theory – Theories of moral value and conduct, moral language and argumentation; consequentialist and deontological approaches to ethics; ethical naturalism; theories of virtue. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 640, Epistemology – Nature and origin of knowledge, skepticism, belief, truth, rationality, justification and reliability and knowledge of necessary truths. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 641, Mathematical Logic I – The metatheory of propositional and first-order logic. Prerequisite: Graduate classification or approval of instructor.

PHIL 642, Mathematical Logic II – More advanced topics in mathematical logic. Possible topics include the Compactness and Löwenheim-Skolem Theorems, computability theory, Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems, Tarski's Theorem, Church's Theorem, systems of temporal and modal logic, intuitionistic logic, theories of truth, and more advanced issues in set theory, model theory, and proof theory. Prerequisite: PHIL 641 or approval of instructor.

PHIL 643, History and Philosophy of Logic – Selected topics on the historical development of logic; philosophical views of the nature of logical theory; the role of logical metatheory in the development of logic. Prerequisite: PHIL 641 or PHIL 642, or approval of instructor.

PHIL 645, Philosophy of Science – Philosophy of the natural and social sciences, including the nature of theories and laws, the notion of causation, probability and determinism and the nature of theoretical change. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 646, Philosophy of a Particular Science – Focus on the methodological, epistemological, and ontological issues in physics, or one of the special sciences, such as biology, psychology, cognitive science, economics. Application of philosophical methods to theoretical issues in the particular science. Relationships between theories and explanations of the particular science to more basic sciences or other special sciences. May be repeated for credit for courses focusing on different sciences. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

PHIL 650, Metaphysics – Classical and contemporary treatments of the nature of reality, God, the existence of universals, space, time, causality; realism and antirealism, the existence and nature of abstract entities, the nature of events, the nature and logic of time and modality, freedom and determinism, and personal identity. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 655, Philosophy of Mind – The mind-body problem, personal identity, thought and intentionality, action and responsibility; materialism, behaviorism, functionalism. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 658, Philosophy of Language – The nature of language, the various uses of language and their philosophical import, the nature of meaning, truth, reference and issues surrounding formal representations of natural languages. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 661, Seminar in the History of Philosophy – Intensive study of a current issue in the history of philosophy. May be repeated for credit with variation in topic. Prerequisite: 12 hours of graduate work in Philosophy plus instructor approval.

PHIL 662, Seminar in Ethics and Value Theory – Intensive study of a current issue in ethics, ethical theory, applied ethics, aesthetics, or the work of particular philosophers in one of these

areas. May be repeated for credit with variation in topic. Prerequisite: 12 hours of graduate work in Philosophy plus approval of instructor.

PHIL 663, Seminar in Metaphysics and Epistemology – Intensive study of current issue in metaphysics, epistemology, or other core areas of philosophy. May be repeated for credit with variation in topic. Prerequisite: 12 hours of graduate work in Philosophy plus approval of instructor.

PHIL 664, Seminar in Applied Philosophy – Intensive study of a topic involving the application of philosophical concepts and theories to an issue arising in another scientific or academic field. May be repeated for credit with variation in topic. Prerequisite: 12 hours of graduate work in Philosophy plus approval of instructor.

PHIL 671, Professional Ethics – Basic concepts and theories underlying major contemporary ethical codes with application to ethical problems encountered in professions such as engineering, law, business and teaching. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 682, Philosophical Authors – Intensive study of the works of an individual important philosopher, their historical context, and criticisms and interpretations of them. May be repeated for credit with different authors. Prerequisite: appropriate background in the history of philosophy plus instructor approval.

PHIL 683, Teaching Practicum – new course, currently being taught as a 689, Special Topics. See §IV(K) below.

PHIL 684, Professional Internship – Practical experience in an institutional or organizational setting appropriate to analysis and understanding of issues in some area of applied philosophy. Prerequisite: Approval of committee chair and department head.

PHIL 685, Directed Studies – Directed studies in specific problem area in philosophy.

PHIL 689, Special Topics – Selected topics in an identified area of philosophy. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Approval of instructor.

PHIL 691, Research – Research for thesis. Prerequisites: Approval of department head and committee chair.

§III - PERMANENT FACULTY

Scott Austin, Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies (Ph.D., Texas) Ancient Philosophy, Metaphysics; *Parmenides and the History of Dialectic*, (Parmenides Publishing, 2007); *Parmenides: Being, Bounds, and Logic* (Yale, 1986).

Robert W. Burch, Professor (Ph.D., Rice) History of Logic, American Philosophy; *A Peircean Reduction Thesis and the Foundation of Topological Logic* (Texas Tech University Press, 1990); “Royce and Wittgenstein on the Context of Privacy,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* (1988).

Daniel Conway, Professor and Department Head (Ph.D., University of California, San Diego) 19th Century Philosophy, Social and Political Philosophy; “Abraham’s Final Word,” in *Ethics, Love, and Faith in Kierkegaard: Philosophical Engagements*, ed. Edward F. Mooney (Indiana University Press, 2008); “For Whom the Bell Tolls,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, (2008); *Reader’s Guide to Nietzsche’s On the Genealogy of Morals* (Continuum Books, 2008); “The Birth of the State,” in *Nietzsche, Power & Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche’s Legacy for Political Thought*, eds. Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (Walter deGruyter, 2008); and “Does That Sound Strange to You?: Education and Indirection in Essay III of *On the Genealogy of Morals*,” in *Nietzsche, Nihilism and the Future of Philosophy*, ed. Jeffrey Metzger (Continuum Books, 2009); “Whither the Good Europeans? Nietzsche’s New World Order,” *South Central Review* (forthcoming).

Tommy J. Curry, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University Carbondale) Critical Race Theory, African-Centered Theory, Africana Philosophy, Black Intellectual History 1800-present, Black Gender Studies, American Philosophy, Contemporary Continental (Post-Colonialism), Social/Political Philosophy; “Royce, Racism and the Colonial Ideal: White Supremacy and the Illusion of Civilization in Josiah Royce’s Account of the White Man’s Burden,” *The Pluralist* (2009); “From Rousseau’s Theory of Natural Equality to the Resistance of the Historical Inequality of Races,” *The CLR James Journal* (2009); “Please Don’t Make Me Touch ‘Em: Toward a Critical Race Fanonianism as a Possible Justification for Violence against Whiteness,” *Radical Philosophy Today* (2007); “The Under-specialization of Race Theory in American Philosophy,” *The Pluralist* (forthcoming); “The Republication of William H. Ferris’s *The African Abroad, or His Evolution in Western Civilization: Tracing His Development Under Caucasian Milieu*,” (Fordham University Press, forthcoming).

Stephen H. Daniel, Professor (Ph.D., St. Louis) Modern Philosophy, Recent Continental Philosophy; *Reexamining Berkeley’s Philosophy* (ed.) (Toronto, 2007); *New Interpretations of Berkeley’s Thought* (ed.) (Humanity, 2007); *Contemporary Continental Thought* (Prentice Hall, 2005); *Current Continental Theory and Modern Philosophy* (ed.) (Northwestern, 2005); *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards* (Indiana, 1994); *Myth and Modern Philosophy* (Temple, 1990); *John Toland: His Methods, Manners, and Mind* (McGill-Queen’s, 1984).

Robert K. Garcia, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., Notre Dame) Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion, Environmental Ethics, Food Ethics; *Substance: New Essays* edited (Philosophia Verlag, forthcoming); *Is Goodness Without God Good Enough? A Debate on Faith, Secularism, and Ethics*, introduced and edited with Nathan L. King (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); “Artificial Intelligence and Personhood,” in *Cutting Edge Bioethics*, eds. John Kilner, Christopher Hook, and Diane Uustal (Eerdmans, 2002); “Minds sans Miracles: Colin McGinn’s Naturalized Mysterianism,” *Philosophia Christi* (2000).

Theodore George, Associate Professor and Associate Department Head [beginning January 2010] (Ph.D., Villanova) Post-Kantian Continental Philosophy; *Objectivity*, English translation (SUNY Press, under contract) of Günter Figal, *Gegenständlichkeit* (Mohr Siebeck, 2006); “What is the Future of the Past? Gadamer and Hegel on the Work of Art in the Age of its Liberation,” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* (forthcoming); *Tragedies of Spirit: Tracing Finitude in Hegel’s Phenomenology* (SUNY Press, 2006); “The Worklessness of Literature: Blanchot, Hegel, and the Ambiguity of the Poetic Word,” *Philosophy Today, Selected Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy* (2006).

Michael Hand, Professor (Ph.D., Florida State) Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Logic, Metaphysics; “Performance and Paradox,” in Salerno (ed.), *New Essays on the Knowability Paradox* (Oxford University Press, 2008); “Antirealism and Falsity,” in Gabbay and Wansing (eds.), *What is Negation?* (Kluwer, 1999).

C.E. Harris, Professor (Ph.D., Vanderbilt) Ethical Theory; *Applying Moral Theories*, 4th ed. (Wadsworth, 2002); *Engineering Ethics: Concepts and Cases*, 2nd ed., with M. Pritchard and M. Rabins (Wadsworth, 2000); “Engineering Responsibilities in Lesser-Developed Nations: The Welfare Requirement,” *Science and Engineering Ethics* (1998); *Practicing Engineering Ethics*, with M. Rabins and M. Pritchard (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 1997); “Aborting Fetuses: The Parental Perspective,” *The Journal of Applied Philosophy* (1991).

Claire Katz, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of Memphis) Contemporary French Philosophy, Feminist Theory, Modern Jewish Thought, Philosophy of Education, Philosophy of Religion. “Levinas – Between Philosophy and Rhetoric: The 'Teaching' of Levinas's Scriptural References,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* (2005); “Before the face of God one must not go with empty hands: Transcendence and Levinas's Prophetic Consciousness,” *Philosophy Today* (2006); “Raising Cain: The Problem of Evil and the Question of Responsibility,” *Cross Currents* (2005); *Emmanuel Levinas: Critical Assessments*, volumes 1-4 (ed.) (Routledge, 2005); *Levinas, Judaism, and the Feminine: The Silent Footsteps of Rebecca* (Indiana University Press, 2003).

Michael LeBuffe, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of California, San Diego) Early Modern Philosophy, Moral Philosophy; “Hobbes on the Origin of Obligation,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (2003); “Spinoza’s Psychology,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; “Why Spinoza Tells People to Try to Preserve Their Being,” *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* (2004); “Spinoza’s Summum Bonum,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* (2005); “The Anatomy of the Emotions,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza’s Ethics* (forthcoming).

Hugh J. McCann, Professor (Ph.D., University of Chicago) Philosophy of Action, Philosophy of

Religion, Philosophy of Mind; *The Works of Agency: On Human Action, Will and Freedom* (Cornell, 1998); “Divine Sovereignty and the Freedom of the Will,” *Faith and Philosophy* (1995); “Divine Power and Action,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Religion*, ed. W. Mann (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005); “Intentional Action and Intending: Recent Empirical Studies” *Philosophical Psychology* (2005); “Pointless Suffering: How to Make the Problem of Evil Sufficiently Serious,” in *Oxford Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 2, ed. J. L. Kvanvig (Oxford, 2009).

John J. McDermott, University Distinguished Professor (Ph.D., Fordham) Classical American Philosophy, Philosophy of Culture, Philosophy of Medicine; *The Drama of Possibility: Experience as Philosophy of Culture* (Fordham University Press, 2007); *Festschrift – Experience as Philosophy* (Fordham University Press, 2006); General Editor, *The Correspondence of William James*, 12 vols. (University Press of Virginia, 1992-2004); *Streams of Experience: Reflections on the History and Philosophy of American Culture* (Massachusetts, 1986); *The Philosophy of John Dewey* (ed.) (Chicago, 1981); *The Writings of William James* (ed.) (Chicago, 1977); *The Culture of Experience: Philosophical Essays in the American Grain* (NYU, 1976).

Benjamin McMyler, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., University of Chicago) Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Language; “Knowing at Second Hand,” *Inquiry* (2007), “Believing What the Man Says About His Own Feelings,” in *New Essays on the Philosophy of J. L. Austin* (Oxford, forthcoming); *Testimony, Trust, and Authority* (Harvard, forthcoming).

Christopher Menzel, Associate Professor and Associate Department Head [through December 2009] (Ph.D., Notre Dame) Metaphysics, Logic, Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics, Knowledge Engineering; “Process Specification Language: Principles and Applications” (with Michael Gruninger), *AI Magazine* (2003); “Actualism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2008); “The Objective Conception of Context and Its Logic,” *Minds and Machines* (1999); “Knowledge Representation, The World Wide Web, and the Evolution of Logic,” *Synthese* (2009); “Singular Propositions and Modal Logic,” *Philosophical Topics* (1993); “The True Modal Logic,” *Journal of Philosophical Logic* (1991); “Actualism, Ontological Commitment, and Possible World Semantics,” *Synthese* (1990).

Colleen Murphy, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) Social & Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Law, Engineering Ethics; “The Role of Society in Engineering Risk Analysis: A Capabilities-based Approach” (with Paolo Gardoni), *Risk Analysis* (2006); “Lon Fuller and the Moral Value of the Rule of Law,” *Law and Philosophy* (2005); “Reconciliation, the Rule of Law, and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder,” in *Trauma, Truth, and Reconciliation: Healing Damaged Relationships* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

Gregory Pappas, Associate Professor (Ph.D., Texas) Pragmatism (Dewey, James), Ethics, Latin American Philosophy; *John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience* (Indiana University Press, forthcoming); Latin American Thought Prize by the APA, for "The American Challenge: The Tension Between the Values of The Anglo and the Hispanics" (2005); "The Latino Character of American Pragmatism," *Transactions of the Charles Peirce Society* (1998); "To Be or to Do: Dewey and the Great Divide in Ethics," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* (1997); The William James Prize by the APA, for "William James and The Logic of Faith" *Transactions of the Charles Pierce Society* (1992).

Clare Palmer, Professor of Philosophy and Associate Director of Graduate Studies (D. Phil, Oxford) Environmental Philosophy, Applied Philosophy, Ethics, Environmental Ethics; *Animal Ethics in Context* (Columbia University Press, 2010); *Environmental Ethics and Process Thinking* (Clarendon Press, 1998); *Environmental Ethics* (ABC-CLIO, 1997); "The Moral Relevance of the Distinction between Domesticated and Wild Animals," (in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Animals*, Oxford, forthcoming 2012); "Harms to Species? Species, Ethics, and Climate Change: The Case of the Polar Bear" (*Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics, and Public Policy* 2009); "Does Nature Matter? The Place of the Non-Human in the Ethics of Climate Change" (in *The Ethics of Global Climate Change*, Cambridge, forthcoming 2012); "Can—and Should—We Make Reparation to Nature?" (*Topics in Contemporary Philosophy* 9, 2011); *Animal Rights* (editor, Ashgate 2008); *Killing Animals* (co-editor with The Animal Studies Group, Illinois 2006); *Environmental Philosophy* (co-editor with J. Baird Callicott, Routledge 2005); Associate Editor, *Environmental Philosophy and Ethics* (Gale, 2010),

Linda Radzik, Associate Professor (Ph.D., Arizona) Ethical Theory, Metaethics, Social and Political Philosophy; *Making Amends: Atonement in Morality, Law, and Politics* (Oxford, 2009); "A Coherentist Theory of Normative Authority," *Journal of Ethics* (2002); "Collective Responsibility and Duties to Respond," *Social Theory and Practice* (2001).

Roger Sansom, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Biology; *Ingenious Genes: How Gene Regulation Networks Evolve to Control Ontogeny* (M.I.T. Press, forthcoming); "Countering Kauffman with Connectionism: Two Views of Gene Regulation," forthcoming in *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*; *Integrating Evolution and Development: From Theory to Practice* (ed. with Robert Brandon) (M.I.T. Press, 2007); "Constraining the Adaptationism Debate," *Biology and Philosophy* (2003); "Why Evolution is Really Indeterministic," *Synthese* (2003).

Robin Smith, Professor (Ph.D., Claremont) Ancient Greek Philosophy, History and Philosophy of Logic, Philosophy of Language; "Logic," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome* (2010); "Aristotle's Account of Demonstration," Ch. 4 in *A Companion to Aristotle* (Blackwell 2009); "None of the Arts That Gives Proofs about Some Nature is Interrogative': Questions and Aristotle's Concept of Science" (in M. Sintonen, *The Socratic Tradition*, 2009) "Ancient Philosophical Logic," in *A Companion to Philosophical Logic* (Blackwell, 2002); "Aristotle: Logic," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2000); "Dialectic and Logic in Aristotle," in *From Puzzles to Principles: Essays on Aristotle's Dialectic* (Lexington Books, 1999); *Aristotle, Topics I, VIII and Selections* (Oxford: Clarendon Aristotle Series, 1997); "Logic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (Cambridge, 1995); "Aristotle on the Uses of Dialectic," *Synthese* (1993);

Aristotle, Prior Analytics (Hackett, 1989).

Richard W. Stadelmann, Associate Professor (M.Div., Yale) Philosophy of Religion, Process Philosophy, Non-Western Philosophies.

Kristi Sweet, Assistant Professor and Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies (Ph.D. Loyola University Chicago) Kant, Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy; “Reflection: Its Structure and Meaning in Kant’s Judgments of Taste,” *Kantian Review* (forthcoming).

Gary Varner, Associate Professor (Ph.D., Wisconsin) Ethical Theory, Applied Ethics; *Persons, Near-Persons and the Merely Sentient: An Empirically Grounded Approach to Animal Welfare and Animal Rights* (under review at Oxford University Press); “Personhood, Memory, and Elephant Management” in *Never*

Forgetting: Elephants and Ethics (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); “Utilitarianism and the Evolution of Ecological Ethics,” *Science and Engineering Ethics* (2008); “Pets, Companion Animals, and Domesticated Partners,” in *Ethics for Everyday* (McGraw-Hill, 2001); *In Nature's Interests? Interests, Animal Rights and Environmental Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

§IV - OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A. & P.h.D

(A) - Area requirements: In both programs, students must take at least one course in each of the following areas: (1) logic, language and philosophy of science, (2) history of philosophy, (3) value theory, and (4) metaphysics & epistemology.

1. Logic, Language and Philosophy of Science

M.A. & Ph.D.: PHIL 641, its equivalent, or a higher level logic course.

Ph.D.: Two courses from the following.

PHIL 642, Mathematical Logic II
PHIL 643, History and Philosophy of Logic
PHIL 645, Philosophy of Science
PHIL 646, Philosophy of a Particular Science
PHIL 658, Philosophy of Language

2. History of Philosophy

M.A. & Ph.D.: Two courses from the following.

PHIL 611, Ancient Philosophy
PHIL 614, Medieval Philosophy
PHIL 616, Modern Philosophy
PHIL 620, Contemporary Philosophy
PHIL 623, American Philosophy
PHIL 661, Seminar in History of Philosophy

3. Value Theory

M.A.: One course from the following.

Ph.D.: Two courses from the following.

PHIL 630, Aesthetics
PHIL 632, Social and Political Philosophy
PHIL 635, Ethical Theory
PHIL 662, Seminar in Ethics and Value Theory
PHIL 671, Professional Ethics

4. Epistemology and Metaphysics

M.A. & Ph.D.: *Two courses from the following.*

PHIL 631, Philosophy of Religion
 PHIL 640, Epistemology
 PHIL 650, Metaphysics
 PHIL 655, Philosophy of Mind
 PHIL 663, Seminar in Metaphysics and Epistemology

For the M.A. program only, the following courses may also be used to satisfy the epistemology and metaphysics area requirement:

PHIL 645, Philosophy of Science
 PHIL 646, Philosophy of a Particular Science
 PHIL 658, Philosophy of Language

Depending on their content, the following courses may count in one of the above areas. Consult the Director of your graduate program regarding specific offerings of these courses.

PHIL 664, Seminar in Applied Philosophy
 PHIL 682, Philosophical Authors
 PHIL 685, Directed Studies
 PHIL 689, Special Topics

(B) - Electives

M.A. program: Students must take a total of either six hours (for the thesis option) or 12 hours (for the non-thesis option) of courses selected from the following:

1. Any of the area requirement courses not used to meet an area requirement, with the exception of PHIL 641, Mathematical Logic I.
2. With approval of the student's Advisory Committee, graduate courses outside the department (not to exceed six hours for thesis option students and nine hours for non-thesis option students).
3. Other graduate courses in philosophy, with the exception of PHIL 641, Mathematical Logic I.
4. With approval of the student's Advisory Committee, up to nine hours of 300 or 400 level undergraduate courses in philosophy.

Ph.D. program: Students must take a total of 18 hours of electives selected from any graduate course in philosophy, with the exception of PHIL 641, Mathematical Logic I. However, courses taken to fulfill a student’s area requirements and electives must include at least four courses from among the following (multiple offerings of any of the following courses can all be counted towards this requirement):

- PHIL 661, Seminar in History of Philosophy
- PHIL 662, Seminar in Ethics and Value Theory
- PHIL 663, Seminar in Metaphysics and Epistemology
- PHIL 664, Seminar in Applied Philosophy
- PHIL 682, Philosophical Authors

(C) - Limitations on the use of 685, 689, and 691 hours: The Graduate Catalog includes complicated formulas restricting the use of special topics (689), directed studies (685), and research hours (691). One important limitation is that master’s students may list a maximum of 8 hours of 685 and 6 hours of 691 on their degree plans. There are no such limits for Ph.D. students.

(D) - Language requirement: Each student’s Advisory Committee determines what language requirement, if any, is appropriate for the dissertation, thesis, or internship project the student wishes to undertake. Students whose thesis projects will require knowledge of a foreign language should discuss available options for language training with the Department Head. These may include travel to intensive summer language programs and various arrangements with the Department of European and Classical Languages and Cultures (EURO).

(E) - Grade Requirements: The Philosophy Department requires a minimum GPA of 3.25 in all courses taken since admission to our graduate program and in all Philosophy courses taken as a part of the student’s degree program. Relatedly, note that a course in which you earn a grade of C or lower cannot count as fulfilling any requirement in our graduate program, and that courses in which you have earned a grade of D, F, or U cannot be removed from your degree plan.

(F) - Minimum hours required

<u>Masters program:</u>	Thesis Option	Non-Thesis Option
	(30 hours)	(36 hours)
Area requirements	18 Hours	18 Hours
Electives	6 Hours	12 Hours
Research (PHIL 691)	6 Hours	0 Hours
Internship (PHIL 684)	0 Hours	6 Hours

(Note that if you take 9 hours per semester for four semesters, you will accumulate 36 hours of credit, but you only need 30 hours on your degree plan for the thesis option master’s degree. This allows some flexibility in adding electives or hours of 691, although at most six hours of PHIL 691 may be listed on the degree plan for a master’s degree.)

Ph.D. program: Students without a master’s (or D.V.M. or M.D.) are required by the graduate school to have 96 hours on the degree plan for their Ph.D. Our Ph.D. program requires a

supplementary master’s, however, and for students who have completed a master’s degree, a minimum of 64 hours is required on the degree plan for the Ph.D. So the minimum hours required to complete a Ph.D. in our program would be:

Logic	3 hrs
Area requirements	24 hrs
Electives	18 hrs
Supporting M.A. or M.S.	30-36 hrs
Research	15-21 hrs

Total	96 – if earning supporting master’s at Texas A&M 64 – if entering with supporting master’s in hand

Important note: *A class listed on a student’s degree plan for a master’s degree may not also be listed on the student’s degree plan for a Ph.D. For this reason, if you complete an M.A. in our department on the way to finishing your Ph.D. in our department, you will have to take far more hours of Philosophy courses than if you did not finish your M.A. in Philosophy. For this reason, if you transfer from our M.A. program into our Ph.D. program, you should not take a master’s from our department.*

Our department also requires all Ph.D. students to complete a minimum of 27 hours of formal course work in graduate courses offered by our department, excluding hours of PHIL 691. (This requirement will only be of concern to students using courses taken in another graduate philosophy program to meet some of the above requirements.)

(G) - Non-thesis option (M.A. only): Students who choose the non-thesis option in the M.A. program must complete an internship consisting of at least 90 hours of verifiable internship experience. For this experience the student will receive up to six hours of credit in PHIL 684. Minimal requirements for completion of an internship are (1) a written report of *at least* 20 pages addressing philosophical issues encountered, and (2) an oral defense of this report before an M.A. committee. Faculty advisors may impose additional requirements, to be specified at the beginning of the internship. Please note: Students must receive authorization from their advisors *before* beginning an internship.

Note: *Some special rules and deadlines apply to the non-thesis option. Students planning to complete the non-thesis option should consult the relevant portion of the TAMU Graduate Catalog (“Non-Thesis Option” under “Master of Arts” under “Degree Information”).*

(H) - Supplementary master’s degree (Ph.D. only): Our Ph.D. program is unique in requiring students to complete a supplementary master’s (or equivalent) degree in a field that complements their research or teaching interests within Philosophy. Students applying to the Ph.D. program with a master’s (or equivalent) degree in hand are asked to submit an explanation of how it complements their research or teaching interests in philosophy. The GPAC rules, at the time of admitting such students, on the acceptability of the proposed degree as a supplementary master’s. Students entering the Ph.D. program without the required supplementary master’s degree in hand must also have their supplementary master’s approved by the GPAC, and should secure admission to the program in question during their second year.

(I) - Comprehensive exams (Ph.D. only): Ph.D. students must pass comprehensive examinations in two of the following areas:

1. history of philosophy,
2. metaphysics and epistemology, and
3. value theory (ethics, aesthetics, social and political philosophy).

Comprehensive exams are designed to test your general knowledge of a broad, traditionally recognized area of philosophical research. They are written, administered and graded by an ad hoc committee of faculty appointed by the Department Head. Comprehensive exams will be offered only once per semester (in November, April, and August) and a student may take only one exam at a time. In advance of the exam, as detailed in the chart below, the DGS will first send out an inquiry to see if any students are interested in taking any of the comprehensive exams on the next available date.* If so, an ad hoc committee will be formed by the Department Head and that committee will distribute a memo that describes the form of the exam and provides a reading list.** Students must then provide a written request for a comprehensive exam to the DGS.***

Because faculty members are not normally on contract in the summer months, the August exam will be prepared by the committee by the end of the preceding Spring semester and delivered to the DGS. The DGS will proctor the exam, which will then be graded at the beginning of the Fall semester by the ad hoc committee.

Comprehensive examinations will be graded as either Pass, Fail, or Pass With Honors. Grades should be returned by the committee within 2 weeks. If a student fails an exam, he or she will have to wait to retake the exam (or to take a different comprehensive exam) until the following semester.

* DGS Inquiry	** Memo/list	*** Exam request	Exam date
April 1	May 1	May 15	Nov. 1-21
Nov. 1	Dec. 1	Dec. 15	April 1-21
Feb. 1	Mar. 1	Mar. 15	Aug. 1-21

(Exam dates will be adjusted to accommodate weekends and University Holidays.)

Copies of all exams administered to date are available here:

http://philosophy.tamu.edu/~gary/Comprehensive_exams/.

(J) - Preliminary exam (Ph.D. only): The preliminary exam is tied to your specific dissertation topic. It is put together and graded by your dissertation Advisory Committee. It is taken no earlier than when the student is within 6 credit hours of completing all formal coursework (i.e. classes other than PHIL 691, Research). Your degree plan must be filed at least 90 days before you take your preliminary exam.

(K) - Teaching Practicum (Ph.D. only): All Ph.D. students are required to take PHIL 683, Teaching Practicum, a one unit course designed to help students become better teachers of philosophy, both in their roles as graduate teaching assistants and in their future careers in higher education. While covering some pedagogical theories and different teaching techniques and technologies, students share ideas about common challenges, and reflect on ethical issues in the teaching profession. Students will also prepare some documents that will be helpful, not just in teaching, but also in applying for teaching positions.

Students are also encouraged to participate in the Graduate Teaching Academy (GTA), which is organized by the [Center for Teaching Excellence](#). The GTA is a voluntary one-year program that can be entered at the beginning of either the fall or spring semester. Participants complete five classroom observations of several professors and prepare a Philosophy of Teaching Statement and a Teaching Portfolio to use when applying for jobs.

(L) - Residence requirement: There is a University-imposed residence requirement for both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees.

Master's: You must take a minimum of 9 credit hours for each of two successive semesters, or one semester and a 10 week summer session.

Ph.D.: For students entering with the supplementary master's in hand, this requirement is fulfilled in the same way as for master's students. For students entering without the supplementary master's in hand, this requirement is fulfilled by taking at least 9 credit hours for each of four successive semesters.

(M) - Continuous registration requirement: For both the M.A. and Ph.D. there is a university-imposed continuous registration requirement. Students who have completed all course work listed on their degree plan other than 691 (research) units must be in continuous registration until all requirements for the degree have been completed. Students who leave the area for an entire semester may satisfy this requirement by registering for one unit of 691 in absentia.

Note: This requirement applies even after you have successfully defended your thesis or dissertation. You have to meet this requirement until your thesis or dissertation is approved by the Thesis Office.

§V - TIME-LINE FOR COMPLETING THE M.A.

Assuming that you enter in the fall semester and you plan to graduate in May of your second year under the thesis option, this section describes various deadlines you will have to meet. If you plan to graduate in August or December, or if you are pursuing the non-thesis option, be aware that the deadlines will differ (see the relevant calendars from the Office of Graduate Studies website: <http://ogs.tamu.edu>).

First year: You should take mostly courses that meet area requirements, and you should take a variety of professors, with a mind to determining your thesis topic and choosing an advisor and committee.

Summer: It would be wise to choose your thesis topic and advisor (thesis committee chair) by the end of your first year so that you can use part of the summer between years doing background reading for or actually writing a part of your thesis.

Second year: This is a busy year, during which you must finish your thesis (by the first of March) and defend it (by mid-March), apply for graduation, and, if you are going on to a Ph.D. program, do all the work involved in applying for that. This is why it's good to get some work done on your thesis over the summer. It's also not a bad idea to take some research hours (PHIL 691) the fall semester, when you should be busy working on your thesis and (perhaps) getting your applications for Ph.D. programs together.

[] *Form a thesis advisory committee.* This committee consists of at least three members of the graduate faculty. The chair must be from Philosophy and one of the others must be from another department. This committee is responsible for approving the student's thesis proposal and thesis (or non-thesis internship report), and conducting the final oral exam. Membership on this committee is formalized when you file your degree plan (which your committee members must all sign).

[] *Begin writing your thesis.* Obviously the most important thing is the philosophical content of your thesis, and this should be continuously discussed with your thesis committee chair. However, it's also a good idea to familiarize yourself with the Thesis Office's requirements, which the final copy of your thesis will have to meet. With that in mind, devote some constructive procrastination time to exploring the Thesis Office web site: <http://thesis.tamu.edu/> and downloading the Thesis Manual.

[] *File a degree plan (by October 20, for spring 2009 graduation).* This document lists the courses that you will use to fulfill all of the requirements for your degree. The form and instructions for filling it in are here: <http://ogs.tamu.edu/current/degreeplans.html>. Meet with the DGS or Associate DGS to be sure that the courses listed on the degree plan meet all departmental requirements.

[] File your thesis proposal (by February 6 for spring 2009 graduation). This must be done a minimum of 15 working days prior to when you file your request to schedule the final examination, which must in turn be done two weeks before the examination occurs. The proposal form, guidelines for filling it in, and the cover sheet for signatures are available at <http://ogs.tamu.edu/current/otherstudentforms.html>. Note that the guidelines on the OGS web site were written to cover scientific research. They ask you to state (1) the "objective" of the research, (2) the "present state of the question," and (3) "the steps to be taken to achieve the objective," including things about "procedures" and "data." In philosophy, of course, this won't involve an experimental protocol, it will just involve stating what question you plan to answer or what thesis you plan to defend, why your thesis or question is significant, and at least roughly what body of literature you plan to discuss by way of arriving at an answer to your question or defending your thesis. Your thesis committee chair is the person with whom to discuss the details of this.

[] Schedule your final exam/thesis defense (by February 27 for spring 2009 graduation). The form for this is at: <http://ogs.tamu.edu/forms/faculty/ogsfinalrequest.pdf>.

[] Pass your final exam/thesis defense (by March 13 for spring 2009 graduation). The defense consists of an approximately two hour meeting with your Advisory Committee, at which you will be asked to summarize your project, how you came to be interested in it, and where you plan to go with related work in the future (if any). Extensive time is reserved for members of the committee to question the candidate on the content of the thesis. At the end, the committee excuses the candidate from the room and votes on whether or not to pass the candidate, and whether to require any revisions of the thesis. The Thesis Approval Form that your committee will have to sign is here: [http://thesis.tamu.edu/document/approval_form/Approval_Form\(MS-MA\).pdf](http://thesis.tamu.edu/document/approval_form/Approval_Form(MS-MA).pdf).

[] Submit your thesis and approval form to the Thesis Office (by March 27 for spring 2009 graduation). Theses must be uploaded via <http://thesis.tamu.edu> in PDF format. The original, hard copy of the approval form must be submitted to the Thesis Office (612 Sterling Evans Library).

[] Submit your corrected thesis to the Thesis Office (by April 29 for spring 2009 graduation). "Corrected" here means corrected in all the ways necessary to satisfy the Thesis Office, so be diligent dealing with the corrections the Thesis Office asks you to make.

[] If you plan to attend graduation: This is optional, but if you're planning to "walk the stage" and shake the hand of the President of Texas A&M University as you receive your diploma, you need to make arrangements ahead of time as detailed at: <http://graduation.tamu.edu>.

§VI. TIME-LINE FOR COMPLETING THE PH.D.

Including logic, a Ph.D. student must take 15 Philosophy courses (45 hours), so students taking a full load (9 units/semester) should expect to do at least 2.5 years of work in formal Philosophy courses. The supplementary master's requires another 30 to 36 units, which means about two years of work in non-Philosophy courses for a student entering our Ph.D. program without a supplementary master's in hand. A minimum of 19 more hours – just over one year taking a full load – would then be needed to meet the minimum hours requirement. So a student who successfully defends a dissertation using 19 hours of research can complete our Ph.D. program in four years if they enter with a supplementary master's in hand, or in six years if they do the supplementary master's while in our Ph.D. program.

Students entering without a master's in hand may pursue their supplementary degree while taking Philosophy Department courses, or take time in the middle of their Ph.D. program to pursue the supplementary master's. One option that is ruled out is pursuing the supplementary master's after writing one's dissertation, because the dissertation defense cannot be scheduled until the supplementary master's is completed.

Following is a checklist of the most important steps towards graduation.

[] Form your dissertation advisory committee. This committee is responsible for conducting your preliminary exam and approving your dissertation. Membership on this committee is formalized when you file your degree plan (which your committee members must all sign), but we recommend that you have your committee members lined up by the end of your second year in the program. The committee must consist of at least four members of the graduate faculty, with a majority, including the chair, from Philosophy, and at least one member from some other department.

[] Pass the first of your two comprehensive exams. We recommend that you do this no later than the summer following your second year in the program. For details on the comprehensive exams, see §IV(I).

[] Pass the second of your two comprehensive exams. We recommend that you do this no later than the spring of your second year in the program if you arrived with the supplementary master's in hand, and no later than the summer following your fourth year if you are earning the supplementary master's in residence here at Texas A&M.

[] Take the Department's Teaching Practicum course. This one-unit course is described in §IV(K) above.

[] File a degree plan. This must be done no later than 90 days prior to your preliminary exam and no later than the end of the term in which you have registered for a total of 66 or more hours during your time here at Texas A&M (normally this will mean by the end of your fourth year in the program). The degree plan lists the courses that you will use to fulfill all of the requirements for your degree. The form and instructions for filling it

in are here: <http://ogs.tamu.edu/current/degreeplans.html>. Meet with the DGS once a year to be sure that the courses you are taking will allow you to meet all of the requirements described in §IV of this handbook.

[] Pass your preliminary exam (no sooner than your last semester of coursework and no later than 14 weeks prior to your dissertation defense). For details on the preliminary exam, see §IV(J) of this handbook. The checklist and report form that you'll have to turn in are here: <http://ogs.tamu.edu/forms/current/preliminarexam.pdf>.

[] File your dissertation proposal. This must be done a minimum of 15 working days prior to when you file your request to schedule the final examination, which must in turn be done two weeks before the examination occurs; however, we advise you to file the proposal earlier, as soon as you have formulated your dissertation project with your advisor and around the time of your preliminary exam. The proposal form, guidelines for filling it in, and the cover sheet for signatures are available at <http://ogs.tamu.edu/current/otherstudentforms.html>. Note that the guidelines on the OGS web site were written to cover scientific research. They ask you to state (1) the "objective" of the research, (2) the "present state of the question," and (3) "the steps to be taken to achieve the objective," including things about "procedures" and "data." In philosophy, of course, this won't involve an experimental protocol, it will just involve stating what question you plan to answer or what thesis you plan to defend, why your thesis or question is significant, and at least roughly what body of literature you plan to discuss by way of arriving at an answer to your question or defending your thesis. Your committee chair is the person with whom to discuss the details of this.

[] Begin writing your dissertation. Obviously the most important thing is the philosophical content of your dissertation, and this should be continuously discussed with your dissertation committee chair. However, it's also a good idea to familiarize yourself with the Thesis Office's requirements, which the final copy of your dissertation will have to meet. With that in mind, devote some constructive procrastination time to exploring the Thesis Office web site: <http://thesis.tamu.edu/> and downloading the Thesis Manual.

If you did not arrive with the required supplementary master's degree in hand, you will need to do the following.

[] Get your choice of supplementary master's degree approved by the GPAC. To do this, submit to the DGS a brief, written statement describing how your proposed master's degree would supplement your research and/or teaching interests in philosophy. If the GPAC approves your proposed supplementary master's, the DGS will place a memo confirming this in your permanent file. You should also consult with your dissertation committee when choosing your supplementary master's degree.

[] Apply for admission to the approved master's program. We recommend that you do this no later than the spring semester of your second year in the Ph.D program.

[] File a Petition for Change of Major, Department, or Degree Program with the Office of Graduate Studies. This form is available here: http://ogs.tamu.edu/forms/current/maj_deg.pdf. You must submit it to OGS accompanied by a memo from our Director of Graduate Studies indicating that

you want to maintain Philosophy as your “primary degree program” while pursuing the supplementary master’s.

[] Complete your supplementary master’s degree. Consult with the Director of Graduate Studies in the other department concerning all requirements for the degree.

Below are the things you will have to do if this is your final year in the program, i.e. assuming that you want to graduate in May of 2009. (If you are planning to graduate in December or August, be aware that the deadlines will differ – see the relevant calendars from the Office of Graduate Studies website: <http://ogs.tamu.edu>.)

[] Schedule your final exam/dissertation defense (for spring 2009 graduation, by February 27, or 10 working days prior to the defense, whichever comes first). The form for this is at: <http://ogs.tamu.edu/forms/faculty/ogsfinalrequest.pdf>. Students must be “admitted to candidacy” before they can schedule the defense and this requires them to have:

- satisfied the residence requirement (see §IV[L] of this handbook),
- and the continuous registration requirement (see §IV[M] of this handbook),
- had their dissertation proposal approved,
- passed the preliminary examination,
- completed all formal course work (i.e. non-research hours),
- completed their supplementary master’s degree, and
- passed two comprehensive exams.

[] Pass your final exam/dissertation defense (by March 13 for spring 2009 graduation). The Thesis Approval Form that your committee will have to sign is here: [http://thesis.tamu.edu/document/approval_form/Approval_Form\(MS-MA\).pdf](http://thesis.tamu.edu/document/approval_form/Approval_Form(MS-MA).pdf).

[] Submit your dissertation and approval form to the Thesis Office (by March 27 for spring 2009 graduation). Theses must be uploaded via <http://thesis.tamu.edu> in PDF format. The original, hard copy of the approval form must be submitted to the Thesis Office (612 Sterling Evans Library).

[] Submit your corrected dissertation to the Thesis Office (by April 29 for spring 2009 graduation). “Corrected” here means corrected in all the ways necessary to satisfy the Thesis Office, so be diligent dealing with the corrections the Thesis Office asks you to make.

[] If you plan to attend graduation: This is optional, but if you’re planning to “walk the stage” and shake the hand of the President of Texas A&M University as you receive your diploma, you need to make arrangements ahead of time as detailed at: <http://graduation.tamu.edu>.

§VII. GATs (TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND GRADERS)

Our department classifies all teaching assistants (TAs) and graders as GATs. “GAT” is a TAMU employment category. It stands for “Graduate Assistant, Teaching.”

The Department of Philosophy offers GAT positions to incoming and continuing graduate students on the recommendation of the DGS, in consultation with the GPAC.

GATs must be graduate students in good standing at TAMU, and they are required to be registered for nine credit hours each semester that they work as GATs.

The University pays full-time (9 hours/semester) tuition for all GATs. You may take more than 9 units in a semester, but you will have to pay the additional tuition yourself. GATs are responsible for various additional fees which total about \$800/semester. The department is usually able to help with a portion of this amount, but what we are able to cover varies from year to year.

GATs also qualify for a health insurance benefit as half-time TAMU employees. Plans are available for as little as about \$30/month for individuals, although premiums for plans covering spouses and dependents are significantly higher. Details are available at: <http://ogs.tamu.edu/current/graduate-insurance/>.

GATs can receive a 15% discount on books, office supplies, etc. at the bookstore in the MSC. To do so, you must first get a letter confirming your appointment as a GAT from the Department Office, and when you go to the bookstore, you will have to first go to the accounting window (on the right wall as you enter the bookstore, a small movie box-office style window) and then, when you check out, you will have to stand in a different line (which athletes also use).

(B) Responsibilities of GATs

1. Attend all lectures of your assigned courses. In no case should a GAT be assigned to a course if they cannot attend the lectures. Even in a course that you have TAed or graded previously, it is important that you attend all lectures of the course. This is because the content of lectures varies from semester to semester, and you need to know what was said in the lectures, including knowing what specific examples were used for what purposes. This will help you answer questions from students. Relatedly, always be attentive during lectures. Do not read or talk during a lecture, even if you know the material well and you have heard the lecture several times before – it gives students the wrong impression, and you might miss something about this particular lecture that would help you when working with students. If you *must* miss a lecture, let your supervising professor know ahead of time and make arrangements to catch up on what happened in lecture that day.

2. Do all assigned readings on time. The first time you work a course, you should do the reading twice: once prior to attending the associated lecture, and again prior to teaching your discussion sections (TAs) or grading the next student assignment (graders). When you are TAing or grading a course for the second or third time, you should at least repeat the reading prior to meeting your discussion sections or beginning your grading.
3. Be sure that you understand the readings and lectures. If you do not understand parts of the readings or lectures, discuss these parts with your fellow TAs and your supervising professor. Try to get things cleared up before students ask related questions, but if you are not sure about the answer to a student's question, don't be afraid to say so. It is better to admit ignorance than to risk misleading students, but then do get the answer and report it to the students.
4. Announce and keep regular office hours. All GATs must hold regularly scheduled office hours for at least two hours per week and must be reasonably accommodating about making appointments with students whose schedules make it impossible for them to come in during regular office hours. Office hours should be kept in one's assigned office on campus.
5. Grade assignments conscientiously and return them to students within a reasonable amount of time. When grading, work to maintain consistency, not only across the students that you grade yourself, but with the other TAs in your course. For instance, it is useful to write down the points or features you are looking for, and to coordinate your expectations and standards with the other TAs in your course. Normally, essay exams and papers should be returned to students within two weeks. Students need to have their work returned in a timely fashion in order to improve their future performance. If you are not going to be able to return an assignment within two weeks, tell your supervising professor why and notify your students of this.
6. Manage grades of your students. Format your students' grades and store them using software as instructed by your supervising professor. Make backup copies of your grade data regularly and store them separately from the computer you use – otherwise, you could lose an entire set of grades due to a computer crash.
7. Keep all student work and records for one year. TAMU Student Rules (Part III, section 48.2) allow students to begin grade appeals up to 180 days (six months) after the end of the semester. We ask you to give copies of all grade records to your supervising professor at the end of the semester and to keep all records and all course work not returned to students for a period of one year after the end of any class you TA or grade for. If you leave town less than a year after the end of a course, make sure that your supervising professor knows where you are leaving all of your students' unreturned work.

8. Privacy and student records: Provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) apply to anyone who deals with student records. The Registrar's Office website includes information on FERPA: <http://admissions.tamu.edu/Registrar/General/FERPA.aspx>. When disposing of student records and graded work, we ask you to shred them rather than recycling or just throwing them away.
9. If you are a TA, prepare for and teach your weekly discussion sections. If you have to miss a section, you are responsible for making, in advance, and in consultation with your supervising professor, alternative arrangements to meet your students' needs. Normally this will mean arranging for a substitute TA (one of your fellow TAs, the professor, or someone else acceptable to your supervising professor). In case of an emergency, contact your professor and/or the Department office staff as soon as practicable so that they can make arrangements to meet your students' needs.
10. Attend meetings and contribute to course planning. Your supervising professor may hold regular meetings for course planning purposes. It is important for you to share what you are learning about student reactions to the material, teaching and testing methods, etc. Your supervising professor will appreciate greatly this kind of feedback.
11. Check your email regularly and respond to emails and phone messages. Students increasingly rely on email communication so you need to reply to your emails at least once per weekday.
12. Familiarize yourself with rules on academic misconduct and report suspected cases. At the beginning of your first semester as a GAT, you should familiarize yourself section #20 of the TAMU Student Rules (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/>), concerning academic misconduct (plagiarism, cheating, etc.), and the Aggie Honor System Office home page (<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/>). Each semester, you should discuss with your supervising professor how to spot and handle cases. Whenever you suspect a student of academic misconduct, you should promptly report this to your supervising professor. Do not confront the suspected student yourself. Always record in writing your reasons for suspicion and keep copies of all related evidence.
13. Perform other tasks assigned to you. Your supervising professor may ask you to do various other things, such as setting up the lecture hall before class, taking attendance, or proctoring exams.

(C) Continuation of appointment

Your appointment as a GAT is contingent upon satisfactory performance of your responsibilities and satisfactory progress in your graduate program.

(D) Rights of GATs

1. Workload. GATs are on half-time appointments. This means that their workload should not *average out to* over 20 hours per week. However, the workload of a college teacher varies across the semester, and this is also true for TAs and graders. For instance, if you are grading for a class in which students take written exams or write papers, there will be certain weeks when you have to do more than 20 hours of work (in order to return these assignments in a timely fashion while keeping up with your other duties in the course) but others where you have relatively little work to do. Still, across the weeks, counting everything you are required to do (including attend lectures and related meetings, prepare for and teach discussion sections, do the assigned readings, keep office hours and appointments, respond to student emails and phone calls, and grade assignments), your workload as a TA or grader should average out to 20 hours a week or less. If you find that it does not, discuss this with your supervising professor.
2. Switching assignments. The Director of Graduate Studies will make an effort to accommodate GATs' preferences, but the Department's need to cover all the large sections of courses taught makes it impossible to give each TA the particular assignment they would prefer. If you are thinking about asking the Director of Graduate Studies for a different assignment, please bear this in mind. Also bear in mind that it usually takes less time to work the same class a second time than to work a new class the first time.
3. Feedback from supervising professor: You have the right to request that your supervising professor attend some of your discussion sections and give you feedback on your pedagogy, and your professor has the right to sit in on some of your sections. Similarly, you have the right to have your professor read some of the written work you are required to grade and give you feedback on your grading, and your professor has the right to check your grading.
4. Handling of problems: A GAT who finds the workload excessive or has other problems should first take them up with the supervising professor. However, if the problem is such that the GAT would feel uncomfortable discussing it with the supervising professor, the GAT may speak to the DGS, Associate DGS, the Department Head, or another University official, as appropriate.
5. Bookstore discount: GATs get the same discount as faculty at the campus bookstore in the MSC. To get the 15% discount, you need to get a letter from the Department office verifying your employment as a GAT.

§VIII. DEPARTMENT POLICIES GOVERNING GRADUATE STUDENTS AND GATs

In addition to university- and graduate school-imposed policies spelled out in the Graduate Catalog, by the Thesis Office, etc., the Philosophy Department has imposed the following policies regarding graduate students and GATs.

- (E) **Grades:** The Philosophy Department requires a minimum GPA of 3.25 in all courses taken since admission to our graduate program and in all Philosophy courses taken as a part of the student's degree program. Relatedly, note that a course in which you earn a grade of C or lower cannot count as fulfilling any requirement in our graduate program, and that courses in which you have earned a grade of D, F, or U cannot be removed from your degree plan.
- (F) **Incompletes:** It is a requirement for receiving an assistantship (GAT, GANT, or GAR) that a graduate student have no more than one grade of incomplete (or F resulting from an expired incomplete) as of August 1. In exceptional circumstances, the GPAC may override this requirement.
- (G) **Academic integrity:** Graduate students are required to abide by the standards of academic integrity set by the University. These include, among other things, prohibitions on cheating and plagiarism. (For more information about the honor code, see <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/>).

An instructor who suspects academic misconduct by a graduate student has the option of (a) handing the case over to the Aggie Honor System Office (AHSO) for investigation, and, if necessary, penalty determination; or (b) determining a penalty him/herself. In case (b), the instructor is requested to inform the AHSO of the penalty, and the AHSO automatically informs the department head. Students may appeal any sanction set by an instructor to the AHSO. (See the AHSO website for details.)

The most severe penalty that an instructor can levy on his/her own is the grade of F* ("failure due to academic dishonesty") and "Honor Violation Probation." The AHSO, however, can also suspend or expel students from the university.

Instructors and the department head are also asked to inform the GPAC of any case of academic misconduct by a graduate student who is employed or otherwise funded by the Department of Philosophy. Once it has been determined that an honor violation has occurred, and any appeals to the AHSO have been resolved, the GPAC may terminate the graduate student's GAT or GAR position, or any fellowships that might have been awarded by the department. In order to make such decisions, the GPAC must first meet with the instructor and with the graduate student. Any decision by the GPAC to terminate funding may be appealed to the department head. Any termination of funding on grounds of misconduct will go into effect at the end of the semester in which the decision is finalized.

(H) **Probationary status and dismissal:** The Department has the following standards for evaluating graduate students and graduate assistants and, in certain circumstances, dismissing graduate students from the program and/or from the assistantship positions they occupy.

1. Scholastic Deficiency

- (a) No student may be dismissed from either the M.A. or the Ph.D. program on grounds of scholastic deficiency, or deprived of support on such grounds, without a probationary period of at least a full semester.
- (b) A student will automatically be deemed “scholastically deficient,” and therefore on probationary status, if and only if one or more of the following occurs:
 - (i) The student’s grade point average falls below 3.25 either in all courses taken since admission to our graduate program or in all Philosophy courses taken as a part of the student’s degree program.
 - (ii) The student fails twice a comprehensive examination in one and the same field.
- (c) The student fails the Ph.D. preliminary examination.
- (d) Students who fall into scholastic deficiency will immediately be notified in writing of their status by the Director of the student’s graduate program, and a meeting will be arranged to counsel with the student about how best to rectify the deficiency.
- (e) Students falling into category (a) above will have one semester to raise their GPA to an acceptable level, following which they will be subject to dismissal; students in category (b) will have two semesters before being subject to dismissal, and students in category (c) four semesters.
- (f) At the end of each semester, the GPAC will meet to consider cases of students then subject to dismissal. Before each meeting, each student will be provided the opportunity to offer in writing any evidence he or she considers extenuating. The student will also be accorded the opportunity to address the meeting of the GPAC at which their case is considered. The Committee will vote as to whether the student should be dismissed. Decision will be by majority. The result of this vote will be communicated in writing to the student, and will constitute a recommendation from the GPAC to the Graduate Faculty, which will then be asked to meet to consider and vote upon the case. Full documentation of the case will be provided to each member of the Graduate Faculty, including any additional information the student may wish to provide. The vote of the Graduate Faculty will constitute a recommendation to the Department Head, whose decision is final.
- (g) At the end of every semester, the GPAC will solicit from the faculty any information they may wish to provide, positive or negative, about the academic performance of any graduate student. Any serious problem should be brought to the student’s

attention by the appropriate Director. Faculty will be informed at the beginning of each semester that this information will be requested when the semester is ended.

2. Failure to Perform Assistantship Duties Satisfactorily

- (a) At the beginning of each semester, the GPAC Chair will write to faculty members receiving graduate assistance that semester, informing them of the graduate students assigned to their courses. The letter will remind the faculty member of the importance of making the Assistants' duties clear to them, and will urge that any serious or persistent deficit or failure in the performance of those duties be reported as soon as possible to the student's Program Director.
- (b) Whenever a problem is brought to a Program Director's attention, he or she will counsel with the faculty member and the student in an effort to resolve it. If the Program Director deems it necessary, he or she may ask the GPAC to recommend that the student be placed on probationary status. If the Director considers the problem serious or pressing enough to warrant immediate termination of the student's Assistantship, or dismissal from the program, these measures too may be requested. The GPAC's decision in any of these matters will be by majority vote. If the request of the Director is approved, the decision will constitute a recommendation to the Department Head.
- (c) Before considering such cases, the GPAC will provide the student in question with a written statement of the complaints against him or her. Both the student and the faculty member with whom the complaint originates will be accorded the opportunity to provide the Committee with any evidence they deem pertinent to the case, and to address in person the meeting of the GPAC at which the complaint is considered. The GPAC's decision on the case will be communicated in writing to the student. If the decision is to recommend action by the Department Head, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Department Head with full documentation, including anything additional the student may wish to provide. The decision of the Department Head is final.
- (d) At the end of each semester, the GPAC will consider the case of any student on probationary status for deficiency or failure in the performance of Assistantship duties. The committee will vote on whether to return the student to good standing, continue the probation, or recommend dismissal or termination of support to the Department Head.
- (e) At the end of each semester, the DGS will solicit from the faculty who have had graduate assistants during that semester a brief evaluation of the performance of each student assigned to them. Where performance problems are indicated by faculty, their reports will form the basis for a counseling session between the student and the appropriate Program Director. Faculty will be informed at the beginning of each semester that this information will be requested and used this way when the semester

is ended.

- (I) **Applications for transfer into the Ph.D. program from the M.A. program:** Master's program students may request to transfer into our PhD program, with permission of their thesis committee members and the Department Head, using the form "Petition for Change of Major, Degree, or Department" found on the Office of Graduate Students website. However, Department policy requires that the GPAC approve, by majority vote, all transfers from the MA program into the PhD program. Students wishing to transfer must provide the GPAC with the following:
1. Three letters of recommendation from faculty within our Department.
 2. A writing sample consisting of a paper written for a graduate course taken in our Department.
 3. A statement of purpose that explains (a) what area they would expect to write their Ph.D. dissertation on and (b) what degree they propose to use as their complimentary master's and how that degree would complement their research and/or teaching interests within philosophy.

Applications for transfer into the PhD program may be made at any time, however, the GPAC will normally only consider applications along with external applicants to the PhD program which it ranks in early March.

§IX. INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students should identify themselves as such to Katherine Jakubik in the department office (845-5660) and should communicate with her well ahead of time regarding taking the English Language Proficiency Exam, getting a Social Security Number, and Employment Eligibility Certification.

- (J) **English Language Proficiency Exam:** In order to serve as GATs, International Students must pass, prior to the beginning of their first semester, the English Language Proficiency Examination (ELPE) administered by Measurement and Research Services on behalf of the English Language Institute at Texas A&M. Information on the ELPE is available from the International Programs Office: <http://international.tamu.edu>. Students who can show that they have completed an equivalent English proficiency certification program at another U.S. institution and students who have graduated with a bachelor's degree following four years of study at a U.S. institution may be exempted from the ELPE by the Office of Graduate Studies.
- (K) **Social Security Number:** International students must obtain a U.S. Social Security number before they can be employed as graduate assistants. The necessary forms must be processed before they can receive their first paycheck, so international students should obtain the forms from consulate offices in their home countries well ahead of time.
- (L) **Employment Eligibility Certification:** International students must also be authorized to serve as graduate assistants through the International Student Service's (ISS) Employment Eligibility Certification (EEC) system.

§X. OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Apart from GAT positions, our graduate program budget includes money to support travel by graduate students to present papers at conferences. To apply, send an email to the DGS with “TRAVEL REQUEST” in the subject line and the following information in the body of the email:

1. The title, dates, and location of the conference you will be attending.
2. The title of the paper you will be presenting there.
3. Estimated costs involved in attending (including airfare, ground transport, hotel, conference registration, and meals).

The Melbern G. Glasscock Center For Humanities Research (<http://glasscock.tamu.edu/>) provides funds for the same purpose, and in order to support as much graduate student travel as possible each year, we ask students to first (or simultaneously) apply to the Glasscock Center for support. Their applications form is here:

<http://glasscock.tamu.edu/PDFs/Calls/GradTravelConf.pdf>

The Glasscock Center also has various other funding opportunities for graduate students:

http://glasscock.tamu.edu/Funding_Opportunities/grad_funding.html

including Stipendiary Fellow awards that provide \$1000 in support of research (this can be used for research-related travel, book purchases, etc.).

In addition to the Glasscock Center, the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) and the Graduate Student Council (GIC) both support graduate students traveling to present at conferences.

The OGS program is described here: <http://ogs.tamu.edu/current/researchpresgrant.html>

The GSC program is described here: <http://gsc.tamu.edu/travelawards>.

§XI. MISCELLANEOUS USEFUL INFORMATION

The Department maintains a graduate student email list and all graduate students are subscribed to this list via their Department email account. Important announcements go out via this list and you must read your email on this account regularly. Ask Tom Ellis for help if you want this email forwarded.

Gary Varner's web site includes a page of "Useful Links for Graduate Students" (<http://philosophy.tamu.edu/~gary/links.forgrads.html>) which includes the following:

- A PDF copy of this Handbook, with hot links to referenced sites, is itself available here: http://philosophy.tamu.edu/Philosophy/Graduate_Program/Graduate_Student_Handbook.pdf
- sso.tamu.edu is your gateway to information on benefits, payroll, etc.
- From TAMUDirect.tamu.edu you can download class rosters and email your students. (Note: fall semester 2009, this system is being replaced with Howdy.tamu.edu.)
- The [Aggie Honor System](#) and the [Student Rules](#) are both available on-line.
- From the [Registrar's Office](#) you can get the [Academic Calendar](#), which lists various holidays, deadlines, etc.
- You can also access the graduate and undergraduate [Catalogs](#) on-line.
- From the [Office of Graduate Studies](#) website you can download most of the forms you need for various purposes.
- The [Thesis Office](#) website you can download the [Thesis Manual](#).
- Copies of all comprehensive exams administered to date are available on-line here: http://philosophy.tamu.edu/~gary/Comprehensive_exams/.
- The Department's constitution and bylaws are here: <http://philosophy.tamu.edu/Resources/Bylaws.html>.