

# PHILOSOPHY, MA

**Banner Code:** LA-MA-PHIL

## Academic Advising

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Website: [philosophy.gmu.edu/programs/la-ma-phil](http://philosophy.gmu.edu/programs/la-ma-phil)

Students in the Master of Arts in Philosophy program can choose a master's degree with a focus on traditional and contemporary philosophy or choose to complete the concentration in ethics and public affairs. Course offerings provide grounding in the history of philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, contemporary continental thought, contemporary analytic philosophy, and philosophy of science. Students pursue the degree to satisfy intellectual interest and to further professional expertise. Graduates of the program move on to careers in law, technology, health care, education, and public service, or use the program to prepare for doctoral studies in philosophy.

## Admissions & Policies

### Admissions

Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified in Graduate Admissions (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>). For information specific to the MA in philosophy, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (<http://philosophy.gmu.edu/programs/LA-MA-PHIL/application/>).

### Policies

For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP.6 Graduate Policies (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>).

## Requirements

### Degree Requirements

Total credits: 31

Students pursuing this degree must successfully complete 31 credits, which may include a thesis. They may choose a course of study that focuses on traditional and contemporary philosophy or choose to complete the concentration in ethics and public affairs. Students need to identify an advisor on entering the program and meet regularly with that advisor during their course of study.

For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP.6 Graduate Policies (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>).

### MA with a Focus on Traditional and Contemporary Philosophy

The focus in traditional and contemporary philosophy is for students who want to deepen their understanding of philosophical issues and for

students who are preparing to pursue doctoral studies in philosophy or related fields, e.g. political theory, gender studies.

Students may apply up to 9 credits from other departments toward the degree with focus on traditional and contemporary philosophy with prior written approval of their advisor.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Proseminar</b>		
PHIL 600	Proseminar in Philosophy <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>Ancient or Medieval Philosophy</b>		
Select one course from the following:		3
PHIL 603	Aristotle: Selected Works	
PHIL 681	Figures and Topics in Ancient Philosophy	
PHIL 721	Advanced Seminar in Philosophy <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Modern Philosophy</b>		
Select one course from the following:		3
PHIL 608	Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit	
PHIL 682	Figures and Topics in Early Modern Philosophy	
PHIL 721	Advanced Seminar in Philosophy <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Contemporary Philosophy</b>		
Select one course from the following:		3
PHIL 615	Postmodernist Thought	
PHIL 616	Phenomenology	
PHIL 683	Contemporary Philosophical Figures	
PHIL 694	Special Topics in Contemporary Philosophy	
PHIL 721	Advanced Seminar in Philosophy <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Advanced Seminar</b>		
PHIL 721	Advanced Seminar in Philosophy	3
<b>Electives in Philosophy</b>		
Select four to six electives in philosophy <sup>3</sup>		12-18
<b>Optional Thesis</b>		
Three or six credits of		
PHIL 799	Thesis <sup>4</sup>	
Total Credits		31

1

This course should be completed in the first fall semester in which the student is enrolled in the MA program.

2

May be taken when the topic is relevant and with approval of advisor.

3

Students who choose to write a thesis (3 or 6 credits) will take correspondingly fewer electives.

4

Students must follow the thesis enrollment policy of the university and once enrolled in PHIL 799 Thesis, maintain continuous enrollment as specified in Academic Policies.

## Concentration in Ethics and Public Affairs (ETPA)

The concentration in ethics and public affairs is designed for professionals who want to combine the study of ethics and the analysis of social and public policies in a variety of settings, including business, health care, biomedical technology, law, or government.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Proseminar</b>		
PHIL 600	Proseminar in Philosophy <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>History of Philosophy <sup>2</sup></b>		
PHIL 640	History of Ethical Theory	3
PHIL 603	Aristotle: Selected Works	3
or PHIL 608	Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit	
<b>Public Administration</b>		
PUAD 540	Public Policy Process	3
<b>Ethics</b>		
Select three courses from the following: <sup>3</sup>		9
PHIL 642	Biomedical Ethics	
PHIL 643	Environmental Ethics	
PHIL 644	Business and Organizational Ethics	
PHIL 645	Research Ethics	
<b>Electives</b>		
Select two to four electives from the following or from other relevant courses: <sup>4</sup>		6-12
PUAD 700	Ethics and Public Administration	
EVPP 635	Environment and Society	
<b>Optional Thesis</b>		
Three or six credits of		
PHIL 799	Thesis <sup>5</sup>	
Total Credits		31

1

This course should be completed in the first fall semester in which the student is enrolled in the MA program.

2

Depending on the topic, PHIL 681 Figures and Topics in Ancient Philosophy, PHIL 682 Figures and Topics in Early Modern Philosophy, or PHIL 721 Advanced Seminar in Philosophy may be applied to this concentration with prior written permission of the graduate director.

3

Other courses may be used to fulfill this requirement where appropriate and with prior written approval of the student's academic advisor.

4

Students who choose to write a thesis (3 or 6 credits) will take correspondingly fewer electives. Students are encouraged to use courses from around the university in disciplines relevant to their areas of interest, subject to the prior written approval of their academic advisor.

5

Students must follow the thesis enrollment policy of the university and once enrolled in PHIL 799 Thesis, maintain continuous enrollment as specified in Academic Policies.

## Dual Degree Options

Students interested in pursuing a dual master's program linking philosophy or interdisciplinary studies (women and gender studies concentration) and a discipline other than that listed below should discuss their interest with the graduate program directors of both programs and review the university policies in AP.6.9.6 (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9-6>).

## Philosophy, MA and Interdisciplinary Studies, MAIS (Concentration in women and gender studies) Dual Degree

The Department of Philosophy (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/humanities-social-sciences/philosophy/philosophy-ma/>) and the Interdisciplinary Studies Program (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/humanities-social-sciences/interdisciplinary-studies/>) offer a dual master's degree program where students can earn both the MA and the MAIS (concentration in women and gender studies) in 55 credits rather than 67 credits. This program is governed by university policy AP.6.9.6 (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9-6>).

## Application Requirements

Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified in Graduate Admissions (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>). For information specific to this dual master's degree see Application Requirements and Deadlines (<https://philosophy.gmu.edu/programs/>).

## Requirements

Students pursuing dual master's study linking the Philosophy MA and the Interdisciplinary Studies MAIS with a concentration in women and gender studies will complete WMST 630 Feminist Theories across the Disciplines/PHIL 658 Feminist Theory and 3 additional credits of WMST courses approved by the Department of Philosophy to apply to the philosophy degree as elective credit. Six credits of approved PHIL credits will apply to the MAIS degree as elective credit.

## Accelerated Master's

## Philosophy, BA/Philosophy, Accelerated MA

### Overview

Highly-qualified Mason undergraduates may be admitted to the bachelor's/accelerated master's program and obtain a BA in Philosophy and an MA in Philosophy in an accelerated time-frame after satisfactory completion of a minimum of 139 credits.

See AP.6.7 Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Degrees (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-7>) for policies related to this program.

Students in an accelerated degree program must fulfill all university requirements for the master's degree. For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP.6 Graduate Policies (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>).

## BAM Pathway Admission Requirements

Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified in Graduate Admissions (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>) Policies (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>) and Bachelor's Accelerated Master's Degree policies (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-7>). For information specific to this accelerated master's program, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (<https://philosophy.gmu.edu/programs/la-ma-acel-phil/>) on the departmental website.

Students will be considered for admission into the BAM Pathway after completion of a minimum of 60 credits and after completing the following:

- 9 upper level credits in philosophy.
- At least two of the following with a grade of B or higher in each: PHIL 301 History of Western Philosophy: Ancient, PHIL 303 History of Western Philosophy: Modern, or PHIL 173 Logic and Critical Thinking

Students who are accepted in the BAM Pathway will be allowed to register for graduate level courses after successful completion of a minimum of 75 undergraduate credits.

## Accelerated Master's Admissions Requirements

Students already admitted in the BAM Pathway will be admitted to the MA program, if they have met the following criteria, as verified on the Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Transition form:

- Minimum overall GPA of 3.25
- Minimum grade of 3.00 in each advanced standing course
- Successfully meeting Mason's requirements for undergraduate degree conferral (graduation) and completing the application for graduation.

## Accelerated Pathway Requirements

To maintain the integrity and quality of both the undergraduate and graduate degree programs, undergraduate students interested in taking graduate courses must choose from the following:

### Advanced Standing courses (up to 12 credits with a minimum grade of B in each)

600-level PHIL courses (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/phil/>), with the exception of PHIL 600 Proseminar in Philosophy and PHIL 693 Directed Readings in Philosophy, with the advice and approval of the department.

Advanced standing courses may fulfill the requirement in the BA in Philosophy for Analytic Tradition, Continental Tradition, or Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy, if content is appropriate and with permission of the department.

### Reserve Graduate Credit courses (up to 6 credits) taken while an undergraduate and will only count for the graduate degree program

600-level PHIL courses (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/phil/>), with the exception of PHIL 600 Proseminar in Philosophy and PHIL 693 Directed Readings in Philosophy, with the advice and approval of the department

For more detailed information on coursework and timeline requirements see AP6.7 Bachelor's Accelerated Master's Degree (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-7>) policies.

## Program Outcomes

### Program Outcomes

1. Students will learn to write philosophical work modelled on the writing of professional philosophers.
2. Students will study the Western philosophical tradition and how that tradition is carried on or engaged with in the field today.
3. Students will gain proficiency in critical, analytical, and synthetic thinking.
4. In the Ethics and Public Policy concentration, students will learn to recognize and understand ethical issues and problems involving questions of public policy.
5. Students will use philosophical thinking to illuminate other areas of discourse.
6. Students will learn to conduct philosophical research at an advanced level, to understand current questions and engage critically with sources.
7. Students who write the [optional] thesis will develop the ability to do independent research on an original topic, suitable as a bridge to doctoral-level work.