

Master of Arts in Philosophy

The M.A. degree requires 30 hours of graduate course work. Coursework begins with a first-year proseminar and, in addition, must include 2 courses each from the department's 3 research areas: Value Theory, Metaphysics & Epistemology, and History of Philosophy. Students have the option of writing an MA Thesis. All students finish the program with a comprehensive exam, either focused on the thesis or an integrated overview of coursework.

Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/>) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

Admission to the M.A. in Philosophy

Apply to the graduate program via the Office of Graduate Studies online application system (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/>).

For Fall admission, applications must be received by **January 5th** to be considered for funding support. The deadline for Fall admission is **May 1st**.

For additional information, including relevant deadlines and a list of required supplemental documentation to be submitted with the online application, please visit the graduate page of the Philosophy (<http://philosophy.ku.edu/phd-admissions/>) website, or contact the department Graduate Program (<https://philosophy.ku.edu/staff/>) Coordinator.

M.A. Degree Requirements

The department offers thesis and non-thesis M.A. options. Both require:

1. **30 credit hours of graduate work in philosophy** with a grade of B- or higher in each course and an overall GPA of at least 3.0 in philosophy. At least 15 of these credit hours must be in courses numbered 800 or above.
 2. **PHIL 800 Proseminar** must be taken in the first year of study.
 3. **Required Courses.** Coursework must include two graduate-level courses (500 or above) in the following 3 areas: 1) History of Philosophy, 2) Metaphysics and Epistemology, and 3) Value Theory. The Graduate Handbook lists the department's graduate course offerings and indicates which courses count toward which distribution area. For courses that can count toward multiple areas, the semester course schedule will indicate which topic and distribution area(s) are relevant.
 4. **Elective courses.** Elective coursework can be selected from the department's graduate course offerings. Students are encouraged to consult the Director of Graduate Studies when choosing elective courses.
5. **Thesis Option:** MA students have the option to write a thesis. The decision about whether to do so is standardly made early in the second year of the M.A. program.
 - a. A student interested in writing a thesis should decide on a tentative topic and then consult with appropriate faculty members to identify an advisor.
 - b. Once an advisor is identified, a student should enroll in PHIL 899: Master's Thesis hours with the advisor. Students who elect to write an M.A. thesis must take at least 3 hours of PHIL 899: Master's Thesis. Students can count up to 6 hours of PHIL 899 toward the required 30 hours of graduate credit.
 - c. The grading scale SP / LP / NP will be used to indicate research and writing progress in PHIL 899. Regular contact with the thesis advisor and steady progress will generally yield a grade of SP (Satisfactory Progress). Failure to maintain regular contact will result in a grade of LP (Limited Progress) or NP (No Progress).
 - d. While enrolled in PHIL 899, the student works on the thesis under the advisor's supervision. The department recommends a length of 10,000-12,000 words as standard for an M.A. thesis.
 6. **Final Examination:** all MA students must pass an oral examination conducted by a committee of three philosophy department faculty. There are three ways to satisfy the final examination requirement:
 - a. Thesis option -The student will work with their advisor to identify two additional committee members. Once the thesis draft is approved by the advisor, it will be sent to the other committee members for their approval. The committee must be afforded a reasonable interval within which to read the thesis and suggest revisions (standardly, 2 weeks). Once all three committee members approve the thesis, the student will work with the Graduate Coordinator to schedule the final examination.

The student will complete an oral defense of the thesis in accordance with Graduate Studies policy. The oral examination is held during the student's final semester of coursework. While the examination focuses on the written thesis, the committee may pursue any philosophical issue deemed relevant for ensuring the thesis reflects a breadth of philosophical knowledge.
 - b. Coursework Option - The examination can include any material from the student's M.A. program. In advance of their final semester of coursework, the student will work with the Director of Graduate Studies to identify three faculty members to serve on the student's examination committee. The specific format of the exam is then decided by the student and the committee, often in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. A frequently used option is for the student to select (and perhaps subsequently revise) a paper written for a class and to use the topic of that paper as the focus of the examination.
 - c. Qualifying Paper Option - Students who are earning the M.A. while enrolled in the Ph.D. program can satisfy the requirement with a final examination focused on the paper written in PHIL 901. The student will work with their PHIL 901 advisor to identify two additional committee members. Once the Qualifying Paper draft is approved by the advisor, it will be sent to the other committee members. The committee must be afforded a reasonable interval within which to read the thesis prior to the examination (standardly, 2 weeks).