Students in the MA program in philosophy can choose a master’s degree with a focus on traditional and contemporary philosophy, or choose one of two concentrations: ethics and public affairs, or philosophy and cultural theory. 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. 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 AP6 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 one of three concentrations. 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 AP6 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 600</td>
<td>Proseminar in Philosophy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ancient or Medieval Philosophy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 603</td>
<td>Aristotle: Selected Works</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 681</td>
<td>Figures and Topics in Ancient Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 721</td>
<td>Advanced Seminar in Philosophy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Modern Philosophy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 608</td>
<td>Hegel’s Phenomenology of the Spirit</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 682</td>
<td>Figures and Topics in Early Modern Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 721</td>
<td>Advanced Seminar in Philosophy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Contemporary Philosophy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 615</td>
<td>Postmodernist Thought</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 616</td>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 683</td>
<td>Contemporary Philosophical Figures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 694</td>
<td>Special Topics in Contemporary Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 721</td>
<td>Advanced Seminar in Philosophy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Advanced Seminar</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 720</td>
<td>Nietzsche and his Readers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 721</td>
<td>Advanced Seminar in Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 733</td>
<td>Current Issues in Cognitive Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Electives in Philosophy</strong></td>
<td>12-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select four to six electives in philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 799</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three or six credits of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Credits</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
Concentration in Philosophy and Cultural Theory (PHCT)

The concentration in philosophy and cultural theory is especially for students interested in pursuing a doctorate in cultural studies. Students may apply up to 9 credits from other departments toward this concentration with prior written approval of their advisor.

**Code** | **Title** | **Credits**
--- | --- | ---
PHIL 600 | Proseminar in Philosophy | 1

**History of Philosophy**

- PHIL 640 | History of Ethical Theory | 3
- PHIL 603 | Aristotle: Selected Works | 3
- or PHIL 608 | Hegel’s Phenomenology of the Spirit | 3

**Public Administration**

- PUAD 540 | Public Policy Process | 3

**Ethics**

Select three courses from the following:

- PHIL 642 | Biomedical Ethics | 3
- PHIL 643 | Environmental Ethics | 3
- PHIL 644 | Business and Organizational Ethics | 3
- PHIL 645 | Research Ethics | 3

**Electives**

Select two to four electives from the following or from other relevant courses:

- PUAD 700 | Ethics and Public Administration | 3
- EVPP 635 | Environment and Society | 3

**Optional Thesis**

Three or six credits of

- PHIL 799 | Thesis | 5

**Total Credits** | 31

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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.

Concentration in Philosophy and Cultural Theory (PHCT) is especially for students interested in pursuing a doctorate in cultural studies. Students may apply up to 9 credits from other departments toward this concentration with prior written approval of their advisor.

**Code** | **Title** | **Credits**
--- | --- | ---
PHIL 600 | Proseminar in Philosophy | 1

**Ancient or Medieval Philosophy**

Select one course from the following:

- PHIL 603 | Aristotle: Selected Works | 3
- PHIL 681 | Figures and Topics in Ancient Philosophy | 3

**Modern Philosophy**

Select one course from the following:

- PHIL 608 | Hegel’s Phenomenology of the Spirit | 3
- PHIL 682 | Figures and Topics in Early Modern Philosophy | 3
- PHIL 721 | Advanced Seminar in Philosophy | 3

**Contemporary Philosophy**

Select one course from the following:

- PHIL 615 | Postmodernist Thought | 3
- PHIL 616 | Phenomenology | 3
- PHIL 683 | Contemporary Philosophical Figures | 3
- PHIL 694 | Special Topics in Contemporary Philosophy | 3
- PHIL 721 | Advanced Seminar in Philosophy | 3

**Advanced Seminar**

Select one course from the following:

- PHIL 720 | Nietzsche and his Readers | 3
- PHIL 721 | Advanced Seminar in Philosophy | 3
- PHIL 733 | Current Issues in Cognitive Science | 3

**Cultural Studies**

- CULT 802 | Histories of Cultural Studies | 3

Select one elective in consultation with an advisor.

**Electives in Philosophy**

Select two to four electives in philosophy:

- PHIL 799 | Thesis | 5

**Total Credits** | 31

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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.

## Dual Degree Options

### Philosophy, MA and Interdisciplinary Studies, MAIS Dual Degree

Students interested in pursuing a dual master’s program linking philosophy and another discipline should discuss their interest with the graduate program directors of both programs and review the university policies regarding Individualized Dual Master’s Degree Programs. Students approved to pursue dual master’s study linking the MA philosophy degree 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. Application to the second master’s program should be pursued with consultation of the directors of both programs. Admission to the second master’s program will require that the student has met the minimum prerequisites for admission to the second program. If a student lacks the minimum prerequisites and seeks to be admitted to a second master’s program, the director of the second program may identify ways in which the prerequisite can be completed prior to admission.

### Accelerated Master’s

### Philosophy, BA/Philosophy, Accelerated MA

#### Overview

Highly qualified Mason philosophy majors may apply to the accelerated master’s degree program. If accepted, students will be able to earn a BA and a MA in philosophy after satisfactory completion of as few as 145 credits, sometimes within five years.

For more detailed information, see AP6.7 Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Degrees. For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP6 Graduate Policies.

#### 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. For information specific to the accelerated MA in philosophy, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (http://philosophy.gmu.edu/programs/application/LA-MA-ACEL-PHIL) on the departmental web site.

#### Accelerated Option Requirements

While undergraduate students, accelerated master’s students complete six credits of PHIL courses at the 600-level (chosen in consultation with the graduate program director and indicated on the Accelerated Master’s Program Application) with a minimum grade of B in each course. Once admitted to the accelerated master’s pathway, students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 in all course work. On completion and conferral of the undergraduate degree in the semester indicated in the application, they submit the Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Transition Form and are admitted to graduate status.

As graduate students, accelerated master’s students have an advanced standing. They must meet all master’s degree requirements, taking 25 graduate credits beyond the two courses (6 credits) they completed as undergraduates. Students must begin their master’s program the semester immediately following conferral of the undergraduate degree.

#### Reserve Graduate Credit

Students may take up to 6 additional credits of PHIL coursework at the 600-level as reserve graduate credit. These credits do not apply to the undergraduate degree. To apply these credits to the master’s degree, students should use the Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Transition Form.

The ability to take courses, including ones not listed above, for reserve graduate credit is available to all high achieving undergraduates with the permission of the department. Permission is normally granted only to qualified Mason seniors within 15 hours of graduation. See AP.1.4.4 Graduate Course Enrollment by Undergraduates.