

# Philosophy

In the College of Arts and Letters

**OFFICE: Arts and Letters 446**  
**TELEPHONE: 619-594-5263**  
<http://philosophy.sdsu.edu>

## Faculty

Mark R. Wheeler, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Philosophy,  
Chair of Department  
Peter Atterton, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy  
J. Angelo Corlett, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy  
Robert M. Francescotti, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy  
Sandra A. Wawrytko, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy  
Thomas S. Weston, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy  
Steven L. Barbone, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Philosophy  
(Graduate Adviser)  
Marie E. Draz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Joseph A. Stramondo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Philosophy

## General Information

The Department of Philosophy offers a program of graduate studies leading to the Master of Arts degree. The purpose of the M.A. program in philosophy is to provide students with rigorous advanced training in philosophical reasoning on philosophical topics. The program serves students who wish to go on to pursue Ph.D. work in philosophy or other areas of advanced study; who seek skill development for professional careers such as teaching, law, business, and public service; and who seek personal enrichment through disciplined reflection on important and profound philosophical questions.

*Nota bene:* Anyone applying to do graduate work in philosophy with the hope of eventually teaching philosophy needs to be aware that there are currently many more candidates for positions in teaching philosophy than there are positions available.

## Admission to Graduate Study

All students must satisfy the general requirements for admission to the university with classified graduate standing as described in Part Two of the Graduate Bulletin. To be considered for admission to the graduate program in the Department of Philosophy with classified status, an applicant must fulfill the following requirements:

1. All students must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited U.S. institution or equivalent degree. The degree should be in the field of philosophy.
2. A minimum grade point average of 3.3 in upper division work in philosophy with an overall minimum grade point average of 3.0 is required.

Conditional admittance: Unusually promising students who do not meet all the above requirements may be accepted into the program with conditional status. Students who are accepted conditionally with 12-23 units of upper division philosophy will be required to take additional units (beyond the 30 units required for the M.A. degree) to meet the minimum qualification of having earned 24 units of upper division philosophy before achieving classified standing. Applicants who have an overall grade point average of 2.85-2.99 and an average of 3.3 in upper division philosophy may be considered for conditional admittance.

Students applying for admission should electronically submit the university application available at <http://www.calstate.edu/apply> along with the \$55 application fee.

All applicants must submit admissions materials separately to SDSU Graduate Admissions and the Department of Philosophy.

## Graduate Admissions

The following materials should be submitted as a complete package directly to:

Graduate Admissions  
Enrollment Services  
San Diego State University  
San Diego, CA 92182-7416

- (1) Official transcripts (in sealed envelopes) from all postsecondary institutions attended;

NOTE:

- Students who attended SDSU need only submit transcripts for work completed since last attendance.
- Students with international coursework must submit both the official transcript and proof of degree. If documents are in a language other than English, they must be accompanied by a certified English translation.

- (2) GRE scores (<http://www.ets.org> SDSU institution code 4682);
- (3) English language score, if medium of instruction was in a language other than English (<http://www.ets.org> SDSU institution code 4682).

## Department of Philosophy

The following admissions materials must be submitted electronically via DecisionDesk, <http://gra.sdsu.edu/decisiondesk/>:

- (1) Letter describing the applicant's reasons for pursuing graduate study in philosophy;
- (2) Sample of the applicant's writing (about 2,000 words) that provides evidence of a capacity for careful analytic thought;
- (3) Two letters of recommendation;
- (4) Curriculum vitae or resume.

## Advancement to Candidacy

All students must satisfy the general requirements for advancement to candidacy as stated in Part Four of the Graduate Bulletin.

In order to advance to candidacy in the philosophy M.A. program, every graduate student must demonstrate reading proficiency in a language other than English. Languages may include both the formal languages of logic and mathematics and natural languages other than English (as appropriate to one's studies in philosophy). Students shall consult with the graduate adviser to determine which language is appropriate. Proficiency in a language shall be demonstrated by earning a grade of B or more in either (a) no fewer than two lower division courses in that language or (b) at least one upper division course in that language. All grades must be earned either while the student is a graduate student in the philosophy department or at an accredited college within five years prior to admission to the graduate program in philosophy. Appropriate examinations may be given when available.

To be advanced to candidacy, a student must have achieved and maintain an overall grade point average of 3.3.

## Specific Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree

**(Major Code: 15091) (SIMS Code: 115301)**

In addition to meeting the requirements for classified graduate standing and the basic requirements for the master's degree as described in Part Four of the Graduate Bulletin, the student must complete a program of 30 units of graduate coursework (500-799) selected with the approval of the graduate adviser. Students must complete a minimum of 24 units from courses in philosophy. The 24 units shall include Philosophy 521, 799A, and a minimum of 12 units in 600-level courses.

At the beginning of every fall semester, every new graduate student is expected to attend an orientation designed to familiarize students with the program and to help them to get to know the faculty and other students in the program.

All courses taken to satisfy the master's degree requirements must be taken for a letter grade when this option is available. Graduate students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average in graduate courses taken in the degree program and may not advance to candidacy with less than a 3.3 grade point average. Grades of C or better for graduate courses are accepted for graduate credit. A grade point average below 3.0 at any time during a graduate student's studies is considered unsatisfactory and will result in the student's being placed on academic probation for the following semester. Students who are still achieving a grade point average below 3.0 at the end of the probationary period are subject to immediate dismissal from the program.

To be eligible to enroll in Philosophy 799A, a student must be advanced to candidacy. Each student will arrange for a committee of no less than three tenured/tenure track SDSU faculty members (two of these necessarily must be from the Philosophy Department; one of the three must be from outside the Philosophy Department). One faculty member from the Philosophy Department will serve as the chair/director of the thesis.

## Courses Acceptable for Master's Degree Program in Philosophy (PHIL)

Refer to *Courses and Curricula and Regulations of the Division of Graduate Affairs* sections of this bulletin for explanation of the course numbering system, unit or credit hour, prerequisites, and related information.

### UPPER DIVISION COURSES

#### PHIL 505. Nineteenth-Century European Philosophy (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Major European philosophers of the nineteenth century. May include Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Mill, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer. (Formerly numbered Philosophy 414.)

#### PHIL 506. Twentieth-Century Continental Philosophy (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Major figures and movements in European philosophy from Husserl to the present.

#### PHIL 508. Existentialism (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

The philosophical aspects of existentialism. Major emphasis is on the diversity of thought within a common approach as this is shown in individual thinkers.

#### PHIL 509. Theory of Ethics (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Advanced topics in ethical theory, including normative ethics and meta-ethics. May include historical or contemporary readings or both. Issues may include content of moral value, nature of moral judgment, and accounts of virtue and right action. (Formerly numbered Philosophy 528.)

#### PHIL 510. Philosophy of Law (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Philosophical and ethical investigation into the nature of law, rights, liberty, responsibility, and punishment.

#### PHIL 512. Political Philosophy (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Selected aspects of the political structures within which we live, such as law, power, sovereignty, justice, liberty, welfare.

#### PHIL 514. Philosophy of Art (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

The nature of aesthetic experience. Principal Western theories of art in relation to actual artistic production and to the function of art in society. (Formerly numbered Philosophy 542.)

#### PHIL 515. Philosophy of Film (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Investigation into metaphysical, aesthetic, and epistemological dimensions of film. Narration, authorship, cognitive and emotional engagement, social and philosophical ramifications.

#### PHIL 516. Non-Western Aesthetics (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

How non-Western cultures developed aesthetic theories complementing, challenging, or expanding more familiar Amero-eurocentric theories. Historical and contemporary works representing a spectrum of non-Western philosophies.

#### PHIL 521. Deductive Logic (3)

Prerequisite: Philosophy 120.

Principles of inference for symbolic deductive systems; connectives, quantifiers, relations and sets. Interpretations of deductive systems in mathematics, science and ordinary language. Not open to students with credit in Mathematics 523.

#### PHIL 523. Theory of Knowledge (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Philosophical analysis of knowledge, including conceptions of belief, justification, and truth.

#### PHIL 530. Metaphysics (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Prominent theories of reality, e.g., realism and nominalism, materialism and idealism, teleology and determinism. (Formerly numbered Philosophy 525.)

#### PHIL 534. Philosophy of Language (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

An introduction to theories of meaning for natural languages and formal systems; concepts of truth, synonymy and analyticity; related epistemological and ontological problems. (Formerly numbered Philosophy 531.)

#### PHIL 535. Philosophy of Religion (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Philosophical analysis of the nature and existence of God.

#### PHIL 536. Philosophy of Mind (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Prominent theories and arguments regarding relation between mind and body. Varieties of dualism considered along with major materialist rivals.

#### PHIL 537. Philosophy of Science (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

The basic concepts and methods underlying contemporary scientific thought. Contributions of the special sciences to a view of the universe as a whole.

#### PHIL 565. Asian Philosophies (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Dimensions of Asian philosophies, past and present. Encounter between Buddhism and post-modern science, contemporary Asian philosophers ("global gurus") and their impact on non-Asian cultures, enigmatic notion of emptiness (*sunya*, *wu*). See *Class Schedule* for specific topic. May be repeated with new content. Maximum credit six units.

#### PHIL 575. A Major Philosopher (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

The writings of one major philosopher. May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Maximum credit six units applicable to the major. Maximum credit six units applicable to a master's degree.

#### PHIL 576. A Major Philosophical Tradition (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Focused study of a major philosophical tradition (e.g., Platonism, Confucianism, positivism). May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Maximum credit six units applicable to the major. Maximum credit six units applicable to a master's degree.

#### PHIL 577. A Major Philosophical Problem (3)

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Focused study of a major philosophical problem (e.g., the problem of evil, the problem of other minds, the existence of God). May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Maximum credit six units applicable to the major. Maximum credit six units applicable to a master's degree.

**PHIL 578. Philosophical Methods (3)**

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Focused study of major philosophical methods (e.g., uncertain inferences and non-bivalent logics, phenomenological method, deconstruction). May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Maximum credit six units applicable to the major. Maximum credit six units applicable to a master's degree.

**PHIL 596. Selected Topics (3)**

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

A critical analysis of a major problem or movement in philosophy. May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor's degree. Maximum credit of nine units of 596 applicable to the major in philosophy. Credit for 596 and 696 applicable to a master's degree with approval of the graduate adviser.

**PHIL 599. Special Study (1-3)**

Prerequisite: Upper division or graduate standing.

Directed individual study in philosophy on a theme or topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. Maximum credit six units. Maximum combined credit six units of Philosophy 599 and 798 applicable to the M.A. degree in Philosophy.

**GRADUATE COURSES**

**PHIL 600. Seminar in the History of Philosophy (3)**

Prerequisite: Graduate standing in philosophy.

A major philosopher, school, or problem. Their historical roots and subsequent historical significance. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. May be repeated with new content. Maximum credit 12 units applicable to a master's degree.

**PHIL 610. Seminar in Philosophical Problems: Values (3)**

Prerequisite: Graduate standing in philosophy.

Problems in such fields as ethics, politics, aesthetics. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. May be repeated with new content. Maximum credit 12 units applicable to a master's degree.

**PHIL 620. Seminar in Philosophical Problems: Knowledge and Reality (3)**

Prerequisite: Graduate standing in philosophy.

A problem or group of problems in metaphysics, epistemology and logic. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. May be repeated with new content. Maximum credit 12 units applicable to a master's degree.

**PHIL 630. Seminar in Current Philosophical Issues (3)**

Prerequisite: Graduate standing in philosophy.

Problems in current philosophical publications. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. May be repeated with new content. Maximum credit 12 units applicable to a master's degree.

**PHIL 650. Seminar in Teaching Philosophy (3)**

Prerequisite: Graduate standing in philosophy.

Critical thinking and writing skills to teach philosophy. Syllabus construction, teaching techniques, assessment, and outcomes measurement. (Formerly numbered Philosophy 701.)

**PHIL 696. Seminar in Selected Topics (3)**

Prerequisite: Graduate standing in philosophy.

Intensive study in specific areas of philosophy. May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Credit for 596 and 696 applicable to a master's degree with approval of the graduate adviser.

**PHIL 798. Special Study (1-3) Cr/NC/RP**

Prerequisites: Twelve upper division units in philosophy and consent of staff; to be arranged with department chair and instructor. Individual study. Maximum credit six units applicable to a master's degree.

**PHIL 799A. Thesis (3) Cr/NC/RP**

Prerequisites: An officially appointed thesis committee and advancement to candidacy.

Preparation of a project or thesis for the master's degree.

**PHIL 799B. Thesis Extension (0) Cr/NC**

Prerequisite: Prior registration in Thesis 799A with an assigned grade symbol of RP.

Registration required in any semester or term following assignment of RP in Course 799A in which the student expects to use the facilities and resources of the university; also student must be registered in the course when the completed thesis is granted final approval.

**PHIL 799C. Comprehensive Examination Extension (0) Cr/NC**

Prerequisites: Completion or concurrent enrollment in degree program courses. Registration required of students whose only requirement is completion of the comprehensive examination for the master's degree. Registration in 799C limited to two semesters.

**Physical Education**

Refer to "Exercise Physiology" and "Kinesiology" in this section of the bulletin.